Tanong ng Bayan / A16

Pasko sa taghirap, dapat pa bang magpasarap?

Win the last TV of the year. Text 2910!

■ Sports / A22

PBA's final salute to The Captain

■ World / A8

Bush chosen Time's 'Person of the Year'

■ Metro / A19

Cops relieved over escape of drug lord

■ Entertainment / A28

'Crying Ladies' wins in India film festival

In last message, Poe says 'I'll always be here for you'

By Luige A. del Puerto

FELLED by a stroke last week, Fernando Poe Jr. never got to deliver the last message he wrote on Nov. 30 to his followers.

Written in Filipino, it was to have been read at a concert-cum-rally at Plaza Miranda in preparation for the first hearing of Poe's elec-

IN LAST MESSAGE/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

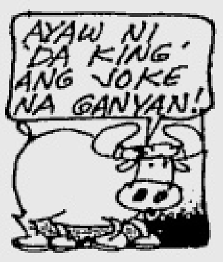
Angara fumes at text joke about 'lynching'

By Christine Avendaño

IT MIGHT as well be a fist landing on his face.

A text message being circulated says that Sen. Edgardo Angara landed in the hospital with serious

ANGARA/ A4


AYAW NI 'DA KING' ANG JOKE NA GANYAN!

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Tuesday, December 21, 2004 ★★★ 48 pages / 4 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 14 P18

website: www.inq7.net

Royal burial rites for FPJ

Security forces brace for funeral

By Christian V. Esguerra and Tina G. Santos

"WE'RE preparing for the worst-case scenario."

Police Senior Supt. Nicasio Radovan Jr. served the notice yesterday as security forces braced for tomorrow's funeral of Fernando Poe Jr., which will bring together virtually all political foes of President Macapagal-Arroyo, making it a potential powder keg.

A worst-case scenario would be the expected mammoth crowd of mourners snowballing into a huge political rally, said Radovan, overall chief of Task Force FPJ and in charge of security at the funeral.

"We have a plan and it will be known if the need arises," Radovan told the INQUIRER.

He said the Philippine National Police was not worried even if the crowd swelled to the size of the Edsa crowds that set off political upheavals in the past.

"Things like this have been discussed in our meetings and we are prepared," he said. "We have enough experience to deal with big crowds. We can handle the situation."

Radovan said at least 1,000 policemen would be deployed along the funeral route at least an hour before Poe's remains would be taken out of the Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City.

There will be reserve units composed

SECURITY/ A4

Chavit slams GMA on Erap travel to HK

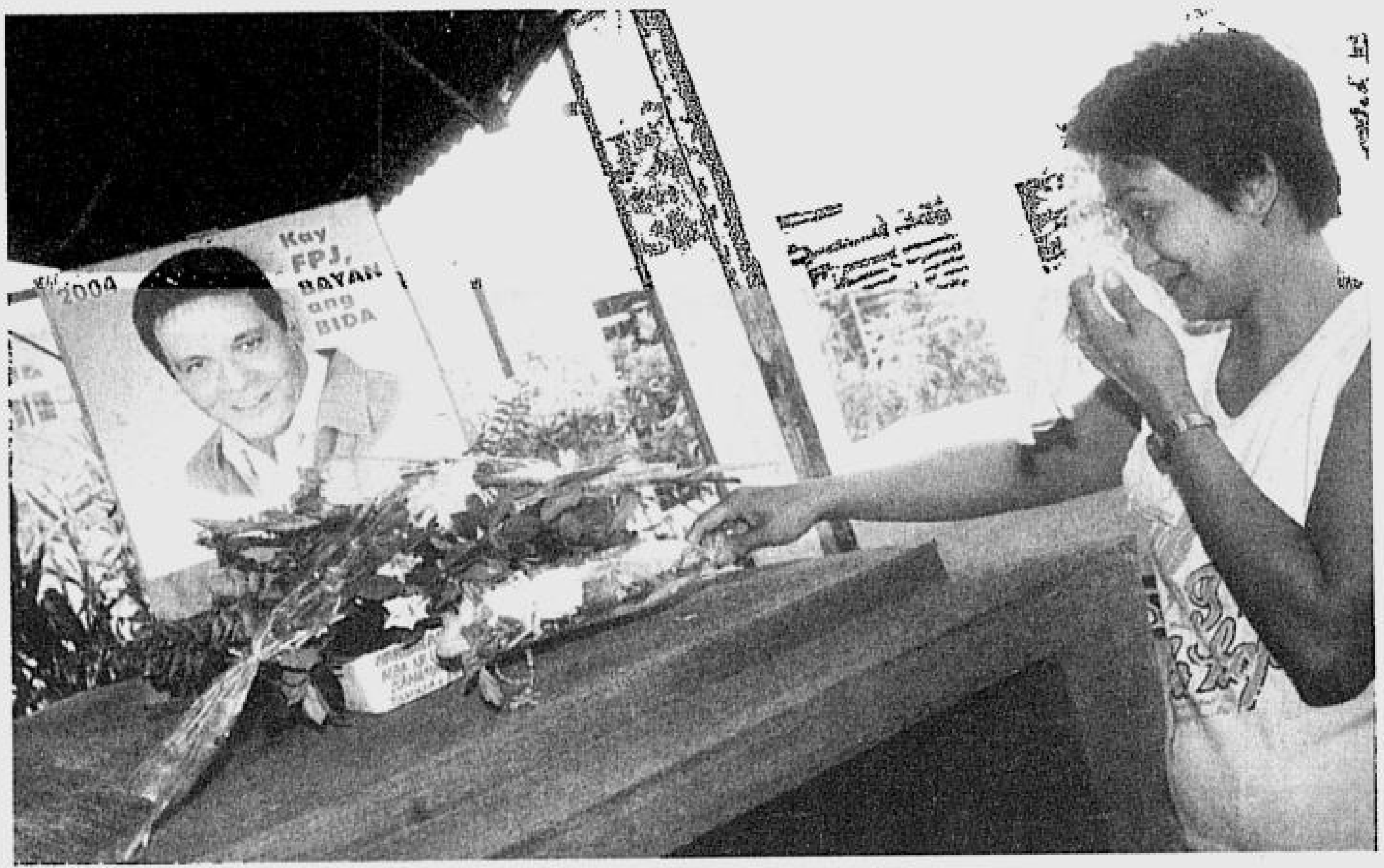
By Armand N. Nocum and Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE MAN whose exposé on "jueteng" payola led to the impeachment of President Joseph Estrada yesterday said he was ready to withdraw his support from the administration if it did not stop the ousted leader from leaving the country.

"We have no choice but to do that if President Macapagal-Arroyo will not change the way she is running the government now," Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson said, when asked if he was ready to lead another uprising if Ms Arroyo did not heed his call to stop Estrada's trip to Hong Kong for knee surgery.

Singson and six private prosecutors called a press conference yesterday to denounce the administration and the Sandiganbayan for allowing Estrada, who is detained on plunder and perjury charges, to leave for Hong Kong despite the strong possibility that he would not come back.

CHAVIT/ A18


Kay FPJ, BAYAN ang BIDA
2004

ONE OF Fernando Poe Jr.'s loyal fans offers flowers to her idol at the Manila North Cemetery. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

LAST SCENES

Dec. 21 (Tuesday)

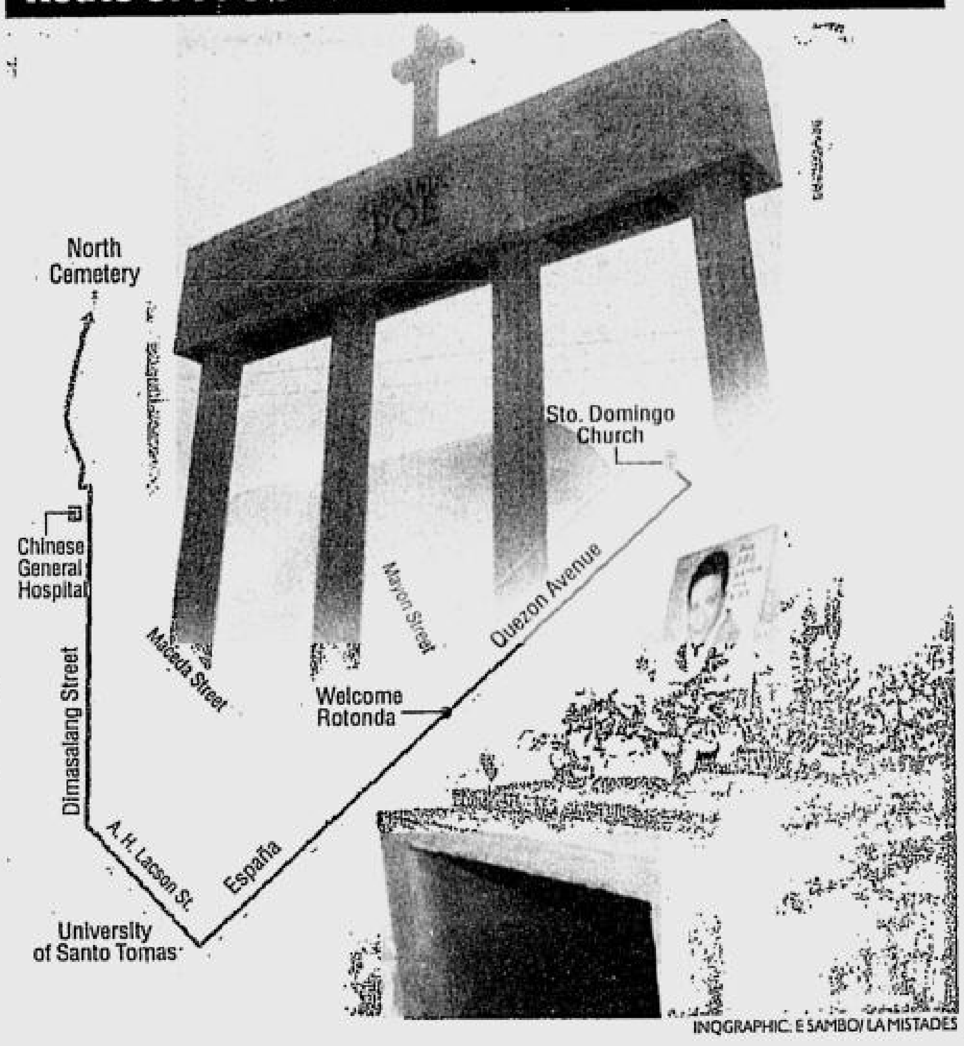
- **8 p.m.**: End of public viewing; FPJ's remains transferred to main altar.
- **9 p.m.**: Mass and necrological services organized by friends in the movie industry; former President Joseph Estrada among speakers. Entry to church restricted to allowable capacity after which doors will be closed.

Dec. 22 (Wednesday)

- **2 a.m.**: Mass.
- **3:30 a.m.**: FPJ's remains leave Sto. Domingo Church for funeral march.
- **4 a.m.**: "Martsang-Libing Tungo Sa Bagong Umaga" starts from Quezon Avenue to Welcome Rotonda, straight to España Avenue, right to A.H. Lacson (formerly Forbes), right to Dimasalang Street, straight to main gate of North Cemetery.

- **Before Noon**: Tomb is sealed.

Route of FPJ's Funeral



INQGRAPHIC: E SAMBO/ LAMISTADES

Hearse pulled by 2 white horses to lead mourners

By Luige A. del Puerto
Metro

HE WILL make his last trip home like a king.

And as planned by his family and friends, his coffin will be mounted on a hearse to be drawn by two white horses to his final resting place, evoking images of the funerals of Europe's royal families.

He will not ride off into the sunset.

Instead, Fernando Poe Jr., the King of Philippine movies, will ride into what his family said would be "a new day."

Per arrangements so far announced, Poe will be interred at the extreme left of the family plot at the Manila North Cemetery and will be lying side beside his brother and fellow actor, Andy Poe.

Behind Poe's hearse during the march will be a carriage carrying his widow, actress Susan Roces, and his daughter Mary Grace Llamanzares, organizers and family members announced yesterday.

In front of the hearse will be a mural depicting the many roles Poe had played in his movies.

In an apparent change of plans late last night, media coordinator Ishko Lopez said Roces intended to march from the church with the rest of the mourners for as long as she could, resting at intervals.

Tomorrow's funeral procession from Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City to the Manila North Cemetery has been dubbed "Martsang-Libing Tungo sa Bagong Umaga" (Funeral March to a New Day).

The schedule of activities has been approved by Roces herself, according to Conrad Poe, younger brother of the fallen icon.

Conrad reiterated the family's call for calm and sobriety on funeral day.

"We appeal to people not to give Ronnie's funeral a political color," he said. "If possible, let us be united. Let us make this peaceful and orderly and render dignity to a man we respect."

Conrad said the funeral procession would start as a candle-light march at 4 a.m.

"Mr. Poe's passion for his horses will also

ROYAL/ A18

Grieving FPJ fans pour hearts out in writing on boards

By Luige A. del Puerto and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.
Metro

"WE LOVE you FPJ; Babalik Ang Panday; Susan Roces for President," grieving fans wrote on sheets of manila paper tacked to plywood boards that were put up near the exit gate of the Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City.

Fans who had lined up for hours to see Fernando Poe Jr. for the last time had found a way to channel their grief—they started writing Da King messages on the board.

Armed with different colored pens, fans from nearby Frisco to as far away as Bacolod, took turns writing the messages for FPJ and his family.

In their postings, many addressed Poe as "Mr. President."

One message read: "*Sa aming hari, mananatili kang buhay sa aming mga puso* (To our king, you will remain alive forever in our hearts)."

Someone wrote: "*Ituloy ang laban ni Da King* (Let's continue the fight of Da King)."

These "writings on the board" have less to do with politics than grief felt at a very personal level.

Volunteer Ronnie Liwanag, 26, said three boards of plywood were put up and tacked with manila paper just the other night so fans could write messages expressing their grief.

Rany Cabriana, another volunteer whose job was to mount fresh sheets of manila paper, said he changed the board every 30 minutes because it would get filled fast.

"At first, we used a drop box. But people thought it was a donation box, so we

GRIEVING / A18

JANJALANI: Dead or alive? PDI PHOTO

Top Abu Sayyaf leader killed? Doubts persist

By Arlyn dela Cruz
Contributor

(First of two parts)

IT TOOK weeks for the Moro Islamic Liberation Front to publicly admit that its leader, Salamat Hashim, had died. Three weeks ago, a source this reporter fully trusts sent a text message saying that Khadaffy Janjalani, the emir of the Abu Sayyaf, had passed on.

Without a body to view, how could one believe?

Several times in the past, Janjalani had been reported killed in battle. Each report turned out to be a dud.

How different was the text message, this time?

For one thing, Maj. Gen. Alberto Braganza, chief of the Armed Forces' Southern Command, had received a similar, unverified report, and from an informant different from the source of this reporter.

For another, how to explain the tears of the people whom Janjalani had loved when this reporter went to see them?

Braganza's informant supposedly said Janjalani's body was ripped in two after the bandits' hideout was struck in an aerial bombardment.

But no body has been found.

Yet, has anyone ever retrieved the supposedly bullet-riddled Aldam Tilao (Abu Sabaya) from the Zamboanga sea?

"Shaheed na … ," said the text message from the source, a trusted go-between of Janjalani and this reporter. The message came on Dec. 1 at 10:27 p.m.

The source did not have to say who was dead. The message could refer only to one person—the most wanted man in the country with a price of $5 million on his head from the US government and a separate P25-million bounty from the Philippine government.

Shaheed is an Arab term used to refer to the death of a "martyr," or to death in a battlefield in the midst of jihad or holy war.

Janjalani himself and others in the Abu Sayyaf had told me, way back, what "shaheed" meant—it was to "die with pride, with your beliefs intact, to die assured of a place in Al-Madinah or Heaven."

It meant going to a special place in

TOP ABU/ A4

WEATHER FORECAST

ORECAST: Northern and Eastern Luzon and eastern sections of isayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to loudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laong	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/12/21/04

Buan Medal of Valor questioned

By Fe B. Zamora

EVEN the near-sacred Medal of Valor (MOV) now appears to have been tarnished by politics.

President Macapagal-Arroyo was reportedly politicking when he announced in April that Lt. Col. Noel Buan would receive the highest military award for combat even before the MOV board could deliberate on his qualification.

Buan, commander of the 1st Scout Ranger Battalion, is expected to receive the MOV during AFP Day rites today. Buan was cited for eading the military team that killed Abu Sayyaf leader Hamsiraji Sali in Lantawan on April 8, 2004.

But a group of military officers said Ms Arroyo "was ill advised" when she announced a few days after the April 8 encounter that she was "elevating" Buan's Distinguished Conduct Star to the MOV without the required recommendation from the MOV board.

Later, upon deliberation by the board, it turned out "there were inconsistencies in the circumstances" surrounding the firefight where Sali and five of his followers were killed. Two soldiers—S/Sgt. Isidro Dindin and Sgt. Ernesto Estember—were also slain in the encounter.

"But these factual inconsistencies were ignored by the board because the President had already announced that Colonel Buan will get the award," an officer privy to the board deliberations said.

The MOV board has 14 members. On voting day, eight elected to give Buan the award, four objected, while two were absent.

"The rule says there must be a unanimous vote, but this was adjusted to two-thirds of the vote because the President had already made the announcement," the officer said.

Vice Admiral Ariston de los Reyes, who heads the MOV board, defended its decision.

"All the questions were answered and cleared. The recommendation has been made," De los Reyes told the INQUIRER.

A recipient of the Medal of Valor is dubbed "the bravest of the brave" and even the commander-in-chief must salute him.

The recipient, or his widow, is entitled to a P20,000 monthly pension, scholarships for his children, and priority in housing loans and United Nations-sanctioned deployments. His children are also exempted from having to take the Philippine Military Academy entrance test if they want to study there.

Established by President Manuel L. Quezon, the MOV is the highest award given to a soldier "for exceptional courage in the face of overwhelming odds."

Along with Buan, his subordinate S/Sgt. Leopoldo Diokno Jr. will receive the same award.

Buan's citation says he "personally planned and led" a special operation against the band of Abu Sayyaf chieftain Khadaffy Janjalani in Basilan.

Buan, 42, reportedly engaged the Abu Sayyaf in close-quarters battle and was wounded in the fighting. "Despite being wounded, he was able to direct and control the rest of his men in the fire-fight and (enemy) withdrawal," the citation reads.

Buan gained prominence in 1999 when, as intelligence officer of the Southern Luzon Command, he was captured by the communist New People's Army in Southern Tagalog. He was released from rebel custody about a year later.

Diokno, the military said, "assisted" Buan "in planning the operation" against the Abu Sayyaf, which has been linked to international terrorists.

Buan and Diokno bring to 10 the number of MOV recipients who are still in the active service. The eight others are Lt. Col. Arturo Ortiz, Lt. Col. Ariel Querubin, Capt. Bartolome Bacarro, Capt. Custodio Parcon, Capt. Cirilito Sobejana, 2Lt. Herbert Dilag, S/Sgt. Lucio Curig and S/Sgt. Roy Cuenca.

Other military personnel who will be cited at the AFP Day rites include Cpl. Rudy Espuelas who will receive the Distinguished Conduct Star, the second-highest combat medal; Marine Brig. Gen. Benedicto Corono and Col. Alexis Afdal, who will be awarded the Distinguished Service Star, an administrative medal;

2Lt. Amar Hagada and S/Sgt. Carlito Paraiso, who will receive the Presidential Gold Cross, the third-highest combat medal, and AFP deputy chief of staff Lt. Gen. Edilberto Adan, who will be awarded the Philippine Legion of Honor in the Degree of an Officer.

With Alcuin Papa

Are sexy mags more important than books?

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

ARE MAGAZINES like Vogue, Cosmo and FHM more important than textbooks?

A proposal in Congress which seeks to impose a 10-percent value-added tax (VAT) on the "sale, importation, printing and publication of books" but exempts magazines and newspapers, has drawn flak from a government oversight body.

The National Book Development Board (NBDB) said House Bill No. 3105, which proposes, among other things, to repeal the VAT exemption enjoyed by book publishers and importers for the last nine years, would further discourage reading.

"The proposed removal of the VAT exemption of books will surely raise their prices and make them more costly to the masses, thus, fewer Filipinos will read books," NBDB chair Dennis Gonzales told Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus, chair of the House committee on ways and means, in a letter last Dec. 13.

Gonzales also protested the bias against books, since the proposed law—one of eight tax bills that Malacañang submitted to Congress—did not repeal the VAT exemption on locally printed and imported magazines and newspapers.

"Are not books, especially textbooks, more important for the economic and social growth of our country than imported magazines like Vogue and Cosmopolitan, local magazines like FHM, and even newspapers?" Gonzales asked.

On Dec. 8, the NBDB governing board passed a resolution urging the House of Representatives to retain the VAT exemption of books "to prevent the worsening of the quality of education and literacy in our country."

A Social Weather Stations survey commissioned by the NBDB in March 2003 showed that 55 percent of Filipinos find books costly.

Also, 43 percent of Filipino adults said they could let an entire year pass without reading a single book.

Sacked police general new PNP comptroller

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE POLICE general sacked over the Hacienda Luisita massacre is the new comptroller of the Philippine National Police.

Chief Supt. Quirino de la Torre took over from Director Oscar Calderon in a revamp announced yesterday by Director General Edgar Aglipay.

De la Torre was sacked as Central Luzon police director following the bloody confrontation between striking sugar workers and police and military personnel that killed seven people and wounded at least 100 others in Tarlac on Nov. 16.

Calderon, said to be a relative of President Macapagal-Arroyo, was named Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Aurora and Quezon) police director, replacing Chief Supt. Reynaldo Varilla who was appointed director for research and development.

Chief Supt. Jesus Verzosa was named director of the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR).

Senior Supt. Rodolfo "Boogie" Mendoza was designated officer-in-charge of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

Director Arturo Lomibao, former CIDG director, was promoted to chief of the directorial staff.

Chief Supt. Rowland Albano, who as CAR director dismantled several private armies in Abra this year, was given the Central Luzon post vacated by De la Torre.

Chief Supt. Doroteo Reyes is the new director for investigation and detective management.

The new assignments will take effect on Christmas Day.

On New Year's Day, four more generals will assume new posts.

NEWSBRIEFS

Cancel Manapat passport, DFA urged

OPPOSITION Sen. Aquilino Pimentel wants former archives office chief Ricardo Manapat deported to Manila to face charges that he tampered with Fernado Poe Jr.'s birth certificate and his parents' marriage contract.

The Senate minority leader said yesterday that he would ask the Department of Foreign Affairs to cancel the passport of Manapat to compel him to come home and stand trial for his alleged crime.

Manapat slipped out of the country months ago apparently to escape prosecution, but his destination was not established, Pimentel said. On the Senate's recommendation, Manapat was placed on the immigration watch list in February.

"We should get Manapat back to the country and make him face the investigation. Because, in addition to the investigation, my recollection was that there was a criminal case filed against him," Pimentel said at a press forum.

Early this year, Poe's supporters lodged charges of falsification of public documents against Manapat with the Office of the Ombudsman. Charged with him were lawyers Victorino and Andresito Fornier.

TJ Burgonio

DOLE releases holiday pay guidelines

THE DEPARTMENT of Labor and Employment yesterday released guidelines on wage adjustments on Dec. 24, Friday, and Dec. 27, Monday, which Malacañang had declared as special nonworking days.

The two special nonworking days would complement the regular holidays on Dec. 25 (Christmas), Dec. 30 (Rizal Day) and Jan. 1 (New Year's Day) as well as the special day, Dec. 31 (New Year's Eve).

DOLE Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said that based on the Memorandum Circular No. 1 which she issued last March 8, the regular holiday pay rule shall apply on Christmas, Rizal Day and New Year's Day.

If a worker reports for his job on any of the three regular holidays, he should get double pay for the day, and, in excess of eight hours, an additional 30 percent of the hourly rate.

If any of the three holidays fall on the employees' rest day and he reports for work, he is entitled to double pay, plus 30 percent of the 200 percent of his salary and an additional 30 percent of the hourly rate when his work exceeds eight hours.

For the declared special days on Dec. 24 and Dec. 27, as well as the first nationwide special day on Dec. 31, the circular provides that unless there was a company policy, practice or collective bargaining agreement granting payment on that day, even if it was unworked, the "no work, no pay" policy shall apply.

If a worker reports for duty on Dec. 24 and Dec. 27, he is entitled to his regular daily salary plus 30 percent of it. If he works overtime, he is entitled to an additional 30 percent of his hourly rate.

If it was his rest day and he goes to work, he is entitled to a full day compensation plus 50 percent of his daily rate and, if he works overtime, an additional 30 percent of his hourly rate.

Jerome Aning

OFWs want investors' incentives

OVERSEAS Filipino workers want the same incentives given to foreign investors when they come home for good after years of working abroad.

In a resolution issued following a three-day conference in Manila, 236 OFWs and representatives of OFW groups asked the government to facilitate the reintegration of OFWs and their families in Philippine society by enhancing opportunities for livelihood.

The OFWs, who convened under the Philippine Migrants' Rights Watch (PMRW), said they wanted the same tax incentives, protection of investments, access to government financial institutions, "and other benefits that are offered to foreign investors."

The group also urged the government to set aside a budget for the promotion of the Filipino culture among migrant workers, and their spouses or children who grew up in other countries.

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts could be tapped to craft programs that would educate Filipinos born and raised abroad and teach them to appreciate their roots.

The 236 OFWs and their representatives, including members of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' commission on migrants and itinerant peoples, convened at the Bayview Hotel on Roxas Boulevard from Dec. 16 to 18.

Blanche S. Rivera

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3453 Series of 2004

Top Abu Sayyaf leader killed? Doubts persist

From page A1

paradise, to be welcomed there by 76 virgins.

This reporter dialed the number of the source. "How did you know he died? Who told you he died? How did he die?"

Last words

The voice on the other end of the line cracked. Then came the sobs.

"I was told by those who buried him and I was told to tell you about it as soon as possible and to tell you what he wanted you to know before he took his last breath.

"Thirteen days *na siyang patay* (He's been dead 13 days)."

The voice rasped on: "You will know the full details. Maybe, someone from the group will talk. Let us just wait."

The source also relayed a personal message from Janjalani—supposedly his last words—for this reporter only.

The message, the way it was phrased, could have only come from him.

After all, years of covering the Abu Sayyaf—a terror group using the name of Islam—has resulted in a deep trust between this reporter and its emir. It has also bred suspicions from the military and media colleagues.

But doubts about his death persisted. Had there really been an encounter?

Last e-mail

Days earlier, the Southern Command reported that it had launched on Nov. 19 an air strike on a suspected Abu Sayyaf camp in Datu Piang in Maguindanao. Newspapers quoted Braganza as saying, "Janjalani may have been killed in that air strike but that information needs to be verified."

The last message this reporter got from Janjalani was a casual e-mail on Nov. 18. It had no indication that the military was on his back.

After Braganza's story came out, this reporter e-mailed Janjalani and asked if it was true there had been an air strike.

In the past, whenever Janjalani was reported killed or wounded, all it took to verify was to dial a number, punch a text message or send an e-mail.

The questions

Almost 95 percent of the time, Janjalani himself would answer—often immediately. When it took him a while to answer, he would always find a way to say that he was alive.

This time, there was no answer. Up to now, there has been no answer.

In fact, for some time, the phone line to Janjalani had been dead, the e-mails had stopped, and the text messages had ceased.

But if he was dead, why was there no announcement from his group? Why was Abu Soliman, the Abu Sayyaf spokesperson who used to call this reporter on her cellular phone, himself silent?

Where is Soliman?

Now, text messages to Soliman draw only one answer: "The number you dialed is incorrect."

It took two months before the MILF confirmed the news of Salamat's death, the explanation being that there was a need to first consolidate the new leadership.

Could that also be the case here?

This reporter called Director Arturo Lomibao, head of the PNP-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group. Lomibao had had past dealings with Janjalani. The two met in 1997 when Janjalani was still a free man. They also talked in 2002 when Janjalani proposed to end the Abu Sayyaf threat as long as there was no talk of surrender.

Janjalani sighted?

But the only information from Lomibao was that, aside from the strikes on Nov. 19, there was a reported gunfight on the high seas off Sibuto Island in Tawi-Tawi. The bandit group's pump boat was supposedly carrying Janjalani and his men to Malaysia.

The Navy fired at the boat but it escaped, stopping over at Barangay Tadu Uwak in Sibuto. Police supposedly saw the bandits while they were loading barrels of fuel. No encounter took place because the armed men outnumbered the police.

The police report said one of the armed men "definitely looks like Janjalani." The sighting took place at 6:30 a.m., Nov. 20, according to the report.

Brother in tears

But it seemed physically improbable, sailing on the high seas, for Janjalani to be in Maguindanao on Nov. 19 and in Tawi-Tawi on the 20th.

This reporter decided to visit Janjalani's elder brother, Hector, who is serving a double life term at the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa for the 2000 kidnapping of American Jeffrey Schilling and for shabu possession.

Lomibao went along, wanting to see how Hector would react.

Hector had not heard anything. He took the news calmly but was obviously holding back his tears.

Strange visitor

Hector said that a few days back, a relative had come to see and tell him about an unusual visitor who came to the house of their parents in Basilan more than a week earlier.

His parents' visitor stayed for three days. Whenever they asked about their son, the visitor would only say: "You need not worry about him anymore. He is now in a safe place."

What made the visit more unusual, said Hector, was that the man had brought with him boxes of goodies from Malaysia—chocolates for the kids and special gifts for almost every member of the family.

"When I was told about the visitor, one thing stood out in my mind. Something like that also happened when my *kuya* (elder brother) died. Many gifts also arrived in our house, many visitors also embraced our parents."

'The brother I know'

The *kuya* was Ustadz Abdurajak Janjalani, founding leader of the Abu Sayyaf, who was killed in Lamitan, Basilan, in 1998.

In Islam, said Hector, if a family lost a loved one, those who knew the departed one would send gifts to those left behind.

Is there any reason to doubt that Janjalani is dead, this reporter asked.

"That is how it will all end. We know that day would come, but it's a pity. He was not able to show everyone his real self, the brother that I know," was Hector's answer.

That left more questions in the air.

Jemaah Islamiyah shadow

If he was killed, why was there no report of anyone claiming a share of the rewards on his head? Why was there no government report of his death? No victory announcement?

Wouldn't Janjalani's death be a blow to the Abu Sayyaf, reducing its threat?

This reporter found it hard to jump to that conclusion, having heard that for some time now, it was no longer Janjalani who was calling the shots for the group.

From what this reporter was told, it was now the top guns of the Southeast Asian Jemaah Islamiyah network that were running the show.

Maybe that, too, is something for the government to deny or confirm. *(To be continued)*

He's definitely dead, say AFP informants

THE MILITARY said yesterday it was verifying reports that Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaffy Janjalani was killed in a military air strike last month in Maguindanao.

Janjalani and his men were meeting with members of the regional Jemaah Islamiyah group in the Butilen Marsh in Datu Piang on Nov. 19 when MG250 attack helicopters pounded the area, said Col. Jerry Jalandoni, chief of the Army's 604th Brigade.

The area is reportedly under the control of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Jalandoni said that based on statements of informants, Janjalani was "directly hit" by bombs.

The informants supposedly said Janjalani's body was covered in a plastic sheet and placed inside a wooden box. Then it was taken by at least 13 MILF rebels to Barangay Pamalian in the nearby town of Mamasapano, Jalandoni said, quoting the informants.

"I would like to stress that this is unconfirmed because we do not have his body ... We have informants and they said Janjalani is definitely dead," said Jalandoni.

He added: "We are conducting a massive search in the area. We have to produce his body ... We cannot confirm his death because we do not have his body."

The United States has blacklisted the Abu Sayyaf, held responsible for numerous kidnappings in the South, and ordered a freeze on any US-based assets of Janjalani.

"The air strike was conducted by MG250s after we received reports of the presence of JI and of Janjalani in the area. They (Janjalani's group) were supposedly having a meeting with the JI involved in the Bali bombings in 2002," Jalandoni said.

Alcuin Papa

Security forces brace for funeral

From page A1

of 100 officers each from the Northern, Eastern and Southern Districts.

NPA hit men?

So far, there has been no intelligence report suggesting that Poe's supporters might use the occasion to demand the resignation of Ms Arroyo, police said.

"We don't think his supporters would exploit the situation," PNP intelligence chief, Director Robert Delfin, said. "There's simply no cause, no issue to arouse sympathy from the public."

Instead of monitoring political groups, Delfin said the PNP was closely watching at least 20 alleged would-be assassins which the communist New People's Army had supposedly deployed in Metro Manila. Their alleged targets—top police and military officials and politicians.

Assurances from FPJ camp

The liquidation squad is part of the NPA's special operations group, he said.

"We've monitored their movements and we're doing our best to catch them," he said. "We fear that they might sabotage the funeral and blame the incident on the government."

Radovan said the Poe camp had given assurances of a "peaceful, solemn, and politics-free" funeral tomorrow.

"We really trust them," he said. "They said they would police their own ranks and that's good."

Traffic, crowd control

In dealing with mourners, policemen were instructed to observe maximum tolerance and be "non-confrontational," Radovan said.

National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) Director Avelino Razon Jr. said security measures were already in place to provide area and site security, traffic management, parking plan, routes security and crowd control.

All five districts in Metro Manila are on alert for any eventuality, he said.

Besides Radovan's task force, four task groups were to handle other concerns to ensure a peaceful funeral from the church up to the final ceremonies at the North Cemetery.

Task Group Daloy will be in charge of parking and traffic management along the route where the funeral convoy will pass, while Task Group Antabay will deploy Explosive and Ordnance Division personnel and K9 units.

Beware of thieves

Crowd control management will be handled by Task Force Antabay and Task Force Rota will be in charge of route and area security. The Western Police District's task is to ensure that the North Cemetery is secure.

Police gave one piece of advice to those planning to attend the funeral: Beware of robbers and thieves.

"The thieves usually mingle with the mourners to steal from people and make a few pesos. With a large crowd, it would be easier for them to ply their trade unnoticed," said Chief Insp. Benjamin Reyes, Theft and Robbery head of the WPD.

Reyes said it was standard practice for thieves to flock to populous events because they would be noticed less.

He specially advised mourners to refrain from bringing their mobile phones and large amounts of cash to the burial.

Thieves' tactics

Should mourners insist on bringing the said items, Reyes said they should keep them in a place that pickpockets could not reach easily. Those with cell phones should refrain from using them in the open so as not to make themselves targets, he said, adding that thieves usually cased their targets before striking.

A thief also usually brings a bag and a change of clothes, he said. After making a hit, he changes his shirt so that he will not be followed or recognized.

Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos urged the police to keep their distance from the mourners during the burial so as not to ignite political passions.

Marcos said Poe's supporters were certain to be emotional and the proximity of the police to them might only create tension.

No trouble, says Imee

"This early, I would like to appeal to PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay to tell his men to strictly maintain their distance in respect for the bereavement of the masses for the loss of their hero," Marcos said.

"We will be there not to create trouble but to share the grief of the family and friends of FPJ in his passing," she stressed.

Marcos said Poe's friends who helped manage the crowd during his presidential campaign would be around to keep the peace during the funeral march.

"This is one occasion that the PNP would do well not to mess up. The police would do better just keeping their distance and leaving the people to their own way of paying their respect for FPJ's remains," Marcos said.

She also called on Poe supporters to guard against possible infiltrators.

"We will be very vigilant. If there would be trouble, it won't come from us," she said.

Leftist militants said there was nothing wrong if the Poe funeral turned into a political demonstration against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

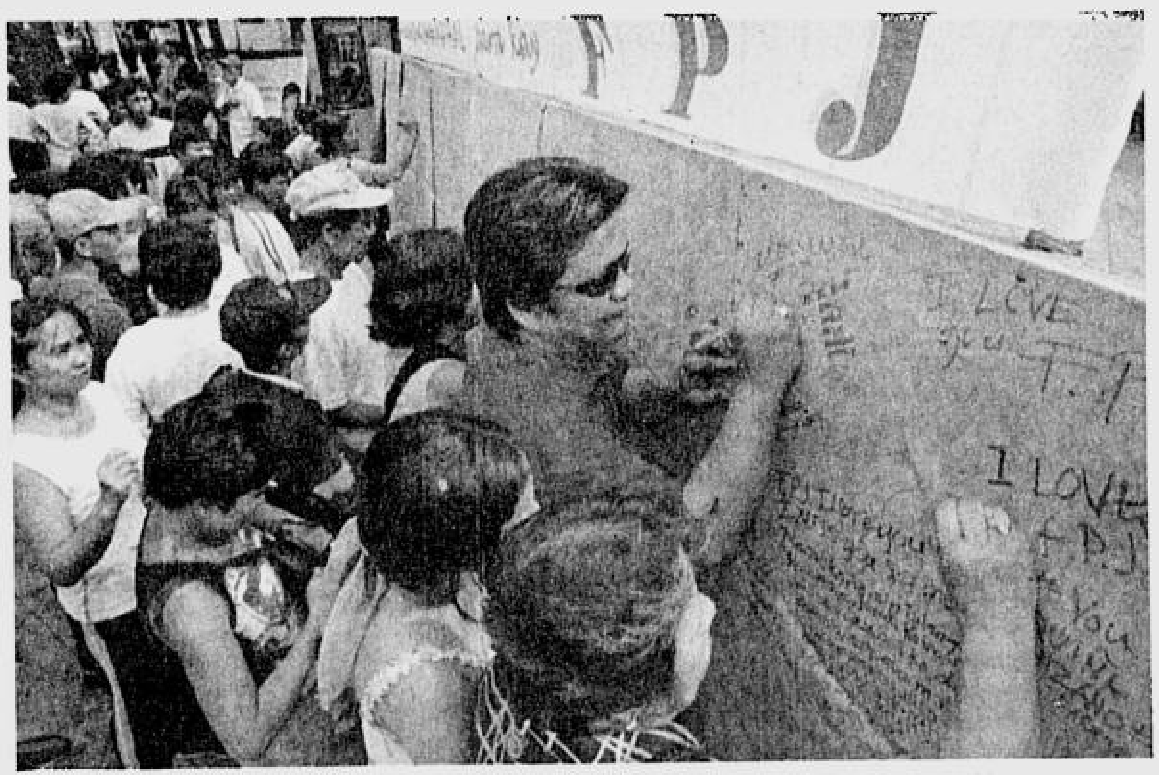
"President Macapagal-Arroyo and her associates are showing signs of political insecurity because they are afraid that the funeral march would turn into the biggest anti-GMA gathering this year," Pamalakaya national chair Fernando Hicap said.

"[Having politics in the funeral] is logical, objective and rational," he added.

The militant Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas said the funeral would show that Poe was cheated in the last elections.

Danilo Ramos, KMP secretary general, said the outpouring of Poe's supporters at his wake would attest that he had a large following "and estimates are saying that more than a million would participate in the march, not counting those who would mourn outside the nation's capital."

"Poe's funeral can hardly be shielded from politics because he is a national political figure and still most people feel that he was cheated by Gloria," Ramos said. *With reports from Leila B. Salaverria, Cynthia D. Balana and Norman Bordadora*



PERSONAL, heartfelt missives to Poe fill up the message boards fast. *(See story on Page A1.)* AP

In last message, Poe says 'I'll . . .

From page A1

toral protest before the Presidential Electoral Tribunal, fellow actor Rez Cortez said yesterday.

In a voice that broke with emotion, Cortez read the message (freely translated):

"My beloved countrymen, as a Filipino citizen, I have been given a rare opportunity to be your servant for change.

"No words can express the big honor you gave me by trusting and believing in me.

"This is more than earthly riches. Once again, my endless gratitude to our Great Creator for His help and guidance. You can depend on me to be always here for you."

"Fernando Poe Jr."

Correction

IN THE article, "Cathedrals of lights," which appeared in last Sunday's Lifestyle, the two photos of Our Lady of the Abandoned in Sta. Ana Proper were mistakenly identified as Our Lady of Mother Perpetual Help Parish, which is located in Punta, Sta. Ana.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses:glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Palabrica, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address:rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.

Angara fumes at text joke about 'lynching'

From page A1

injuries after being beaten up by supporters of Fernando Poe Jr.

An outraged Angara, chair of the opposition Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, yesterday blamed detractors for the "black propaganda."

"These people have no conscience at all. *Maitim ang budhi,*" Angara said, noting that the nasty text message came days before Christmas Day.

The text message, which has been circulating since Sunday, reads: "Breaking News: Angara in critical condition at d National Orthopedic Hospital in Banaue, Quezon City after being lynched by FPJ supporters who suspected him of running off wd millions of pesos in campaign funds during d May 2004 elections."

Angara told the INQUIRER that the "nasty and malicious" text message against him was the work of the "same band of character assassins" that earlier sent a text message charging him with illegal logging in Aurora, his home province, where scores died last month due to flash floods and mudslides.

And the purpose of this latest message?

"Obviously, the intent is to alienate me from FPJ supporters," said Angara, who last year organized opposition groups into the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, the party under which Poe ran for president in the May elections.

Another group fielded Sen. Panfilo Lacson as its presidential candidate, splitting the opposition.

"It can only come from those who spoke ill of him (Poe) while alive and are now gleeful over his death," Angara said.

Poe, a popular movie actor who lost the presidential election to President Macapagal-Arroyo, died last week after suffering a massive stroke. His remains lie at the Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City and will be buried tomorrow. *(See story on Page A1.)*

Some of his supporters, who claim that Poe was cheated in the presidential election, said the defeat played a part in his death.

In a statement, Angara said he was among the first to support the candidacy of Poe after discerning that he was the choice of the masses who looked upon him as their "hope out of poverty and despair."

Being among the supporters of Poe, the senator said he could not be the object of their hatred.

"This is the work of troublemakers and rumormongers," he said, referring to the text message about his being beaten up at the Sto. Domingo wake. "It is completely false and ridiculous."

Angara said his detractors were trying to "take advantage of the people mourning the death of FPJ."

He said he knew those behind the text message, as well as "their evil master." He did not elaborate.

FPJ's poll protest vs GMA died with him, says Pimentel

By TJ Burgonio

FERNANDO Poe Jr.'s election protest died with him, so said his political ally Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. yesterday.

"The protest died with him. The reason for that is the protest was personal to him. Only he had the right to succeed Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo if the charges were proved that he was cheated," the Senate minority leader said at a press forum.

Poe's lawyer, Sixto Brillantes Jr., had declared last week that the protest could still be pursued despite the actor's death.

Brillantes argued that Poe's running mate, former Sen. Loren Legarda, could "substitute" as the complainant in the protest pending in the Presidential Electoral Tribunal.

Poe, a movie icon who lost by over one million votes to Ms Arroyo in the bitterly contested May presidential elections; died Tuesday last week after suffering a stroke.

Pimentel's colleague and a fellow lawyer, Sen. Alfredo Lim, offered a different opinion, saying the case could still be pursued because it transcended personal interest and "bordered on public interest."

"I believe the protest should be given due course because this is not only a personal or individual complaint of FPJ. What is being discussed here is that there was fraud and cheating in the last elections," Lim said at the same forum at the Manila Hotel.

The tribunal has reset hearings on the case for early next year after Brillantes and President Arroyo's lawyer, Romulo Macalintal, had sought its postponement.

Poe, on July 23, asked the tribunal to declare him the rightful winner of the elections, alleging that Ms Arroyo had committed fraud in the May 10 elections.

Tito to honor FPJ in book

A COFFEE table book on Fernando Poe Jr. is what former Sen. Vicente "Tito" Sotto III plans to publish next year to honor the late actor.

"With this book, I can say all I want to say about him," Sotto said in a phone interview yesterday, two days before Poe's burial.

The former senator said he met Poe in 1971 when Sotto married actress Helen Gamboa.

Sotto's coffee table book would include pictures "and my impressions of him as a friend from 1971 to 1998 as well as the time of 1998 onwards where he evolved into [sic] the world of politics," he said.

Sotto said he has kept a lot of pictures of Poe, especially when the latter ran for president early this year.

Sotto served as FPJ's personal manager during the latter's presidential campaign.

"I plan to do the book after the holidays," Sotto said.

The book title? Sotto said he was thinking of "The King and I."

Christine O. Avendaño

Blast expert killed; 9 hurt

PAGADIAN CITY—A military instructor was killed and nine of his students injured when he accidentally set off a grenade while teaching civilian trainees how to detect explosive devices, police said yesterday.

The blast tore through a classroom of the provincial police headquarters here, killing Army Master Sergeant Samuel Casuga, they said.

Casuga had accidentally removed the pin of the grenade while teaching 42 students "bomb detection, identification and handling," according to a police report.

Nine of the students, who were taking the course as part of requirements to become qualified as security guards, were wounded along with Casuga, who later died at the provincial hospital here. *AFP*

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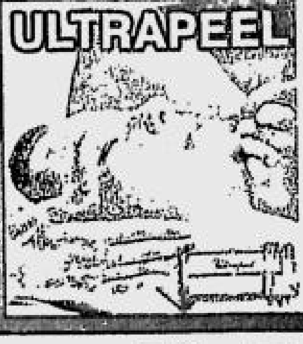

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Kapayapaan at Katahimikan

Hinging Pamasko kay Pangulong Gloria Macapagal Arroyo ng Sambayanang Pilipino

Itigil ang Militarisasyon ng Kabinete!

MAY PINANGA-GALINGAN ang bumababang pagtitiwala ng bayan sa administrasyon ni Pangulong Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. Isa sa malaking dahilan nito ay ang nagaganap na militarisasyon at kurapsyon sa gobyerno. Pinakakurap na ahensiyang gobyerno ang Philippine National Police (PNP) ayon sa survey ng Transparency International(TI). Maging ang Sandatahang Lakas ng Pilipinas (Armed Forces of the Philippines) ay kasalukuyang binubogbog nang mga iskandalo katulad ng kasong di maipaliwanag na yaman ng isang heneral.

Hindi aangat ang pagtanggap ng mamamayan sa administrasyon ni Pangulong Arroyo kung magpapatuloy ang militarisasyon ng mga sibilyang pwesto sa kanyang kabinete. Dumarami ang mga retiradong heneral ng pulisya at military na nakaupo ngayon sa gabinete ni Pangulong Arroyo.

Naninindigan ang sector manggagawa sa pangunguna ng National Labor Union (NLU) laban sa pagluklok ng mga retiradong pulis at militar sa mga sibilyang posisyon sa gobyerno. Hindi mapapalagay ang bayan habang naghahari ang utak pulis-militar sa ating pamahalaang sibil.

Ang National Labor Union (NLU) ay isa sa mga tumututol sa paghirang kay Heneral Angelo Reyes, dating Chief of Staff ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) bilang permanenteng Secretary ng Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) ayon sa mga sumusunod na dahilan:

1. **Pagkamkam ng hindi mapaliwanag na kayamanan at ari-arian** bilang Chief of Staff ng AFP, Secretary ng National Defense at National Security Adviser, na isang paglabag sa Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act (RA No. 3019);

2. **Asal na hindi akma sa isang pampublikong opisyal** dala ng pagsapi sa ilang pulitikal na pagmamaneobra na nagdulot sa EDSA II habang Chief of Staff ng AFP, na isang paglabag sa Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees (RA No. 6713);

3. **Kakulangan ng kredensyal** sa pamamalakad ng isang malawak ngunit pulitikal na ahensiya tulad ng Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) na ang layunin ay ang pagtatanggol sa kapangyarihang sibilyan at pagbibigay ng pagkakataon sa mga lokal na pamahalaan na umunlad.

4. **Kultura ng kurapsyon at mentalidad na kontra sa karapatang pantao** na kasalukuyang namamayani sa isang istrakturang militar na lumala noong panahong si Reyes ang pinaka senyor na lider ng militar. Ang hindi mapaliwanag na kayamanan ng isang heneral na si Carlos F. Garcia; isang survey ng Transparency International na nagsasabi na ang PNP ang pinakakurap sa bayan; at ang pagmasaker sa mga di-armadong manggagawa ng Hacienda Luisita ay ilan lamang sa mga mabibigat na indikasyon ng militarisasyon ng burukrasya.

Ang ating bayan ay nangangailangan ng mga sibilyan upang mamuno ng mga ahensiyang pangsibilyan. Ito'y isang panawagan sa lahat ng grupo at sector sa bansa na maging mapagbantay laban sa militarisasyon ng gobyerno, lalo na sa kabinete.

Huwag nating hayaan na maghari ang militar sa ating bayan.

Tutulan ang kapangyarihan ng militar! Ito ang dapat na regalo ni Gloria para sa bansa.

Dito lamang magkakaroon ng tunay na kapayapaan ang kaisipan ng bayan.

DAVE DIWA
Acting President
National Labor Union

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

The Importance of Japan as OPA Destination

An Appeal to H.E. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

MADAM PRESIDENT:

As one of your administration's strong partners in pursuit of our national development goals, we, the representative associations of licensed recruitment agencies in the overseas entertainment sector, would like to seek your help on a very urgent matter.

It is about the plan of the Japanese government to restrict the entry of foreigners under the so-called "entertainer visa" category which, if implemented, will have serious repercussions on the Philippines.

As you might know, Japan's Ministry of Justice intends to delete from its Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act a provision that recognizes the standards set by foreign governments as one of the basic qualifications for the issuance of an "entertainer visa." This is the provision that, since the 80's, has enabled the Philippines to deploy overseas performing artists (OPAs) to Japan.

The deletion of this provision would in effect make the Philippine government's Artist Record Book (ARB), now the Artist Accreditation Card (AAC), no longer a visa application requirement for our OPAs.

Response to human trafficking

Japan's action is understandable and we respect this sovereign act of our strongest economic and political ally in Asia.

It is obviously one of the Japanese government's responses to the June 2004 Trafficking in Persons Report of the US State Department that placed Japan in a Tier 2 Watchlist of Countries "that are failing in efforts to curb human trafficking."

Our country was also named in the Report but we would like to point out that even Japan's National Police Agency has reported that in 2003, there has been no single case of a Filipino woman trafficked in Japan.

We are also thankful that it was under your administration that an anti-human trafficking law, R.A. 9802, was enacted. It is on record that our sector actively participated in the crafting of that law.

It is with this as backdrop that the Philippines faces the tough prospect of sending a much smaller number of OPAs to Japan next year.

The economic impact to the Philippines of a restricted entry environment to Japan's entertainment sector is dire.

The country stands to lose substantial foreign exchange earnings

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas data indicate that Japan is the third largest source of OFW remittances.

In 2003, OFWs in Japan turned in US$389 million (P21 billion) in foreign exchange remittances through the formal banking sector.

The same data also show a steady increase in remittances during the last six years, from US$122 million in 1997 to US$443 million in 2002.

From 1990 to 1999, bank-to-bank remittances from OFWs in Japan amounted to US$1.07 billion, excluding substantial amount sent through other channels.

It is of record that Japanese promoters, numbering about a thousand, are required by Philippine regulations to maintain an escrow deposit of US$20,000 at local Philippine banks. There is a real possibility that should these Japanese promoters close their businesses and withdraw their escrow deposit, the Philippine banking system stands to immediately lose over US$20 million in precious foreign exchange.

Tens of thousands will be unemployed, hundreds of thousand will be dislocated

Last year, 80,000 Filipino performing artists were deployed to Japan, according to Japan Immigration data. The average OPA deployment per year since 1996 reaches about 50,000.

As of December 2003, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas placed the number of "temporary" Filipinos in Japan at 197,268. These are those whose stay is employment-related and who are expected to return to the country at the end of their contracts. About 95 percent of this number are OPAs.

There are also about 30,100 "irregular" Filipinos in Japan. These are Filipinos who are not properly documented or without valid residence or work permits, or who are overstaying, and could be sent home as a result of the restrictions.

We estimate that over 200,000 Filipinos, therefore, might directly lose their employment if Japan's crackdown materializes.

There are potentially thousands more who could lose their jobs, too. The ancillary businesses that depend or cater largely to the entertainment sector are numerous.

There are the medical clinics, the training centers, the costume makers, shoes manufacturers, and the door-to-door delivery service enterprises. Even the insurance sector could suffer from the decline in OPAs deployment.

The choreographers, trainors, and employees of some 238 TESDA-accredited training centers (estimated to number about 1,900) could be affected.

The same is true with the employees of 135 medical clinics accredited by the Department of Health to conduct medical testing for OFWs.

The employees and workers of about 400 licensed recruitment agencies, numbering about 4,000, will likewise be affected if these agencies cease operation.

The families and dependents of the OPAs (at an average family size of five, or about a million), would feel the worst effects of a possible decline in OPAs deployment.

It is common knowledge that most OFW families depend solely on the remittances of the OFW to enable them to pay for the education of the children, the amortization of their homes, the medical bills, and the daily basic needs of food and clothing.

We support anti-human trafficking efforts

We in the Philippine overseas entertainment sector fully support the President's efforts, as well as Japan's, to eliminate all forms of human trafficking.

But the insinuations in the media that the Filipino entertainers we send to Japan tend to end up in prostitution and other illegal activities and, by inference, that our sector is involved in human trafficking—allegations that could have added to the reasons for Japan to tightly screen the entry of foreign entertainers—are misdirected and most unfair.

Our sector is one of the most highly regulated. Our OPAs undergo rigid recruitment, screening, testing, and assessment process under the watchful eyes of the government. If there are those who circumvent the laws, rules, and regulations that govern the deployment of OPAs, they do not belong to our sector and it is our position that these violators should be apprehended and prosecuted to the highest extent of the law.

It is also our commitment to self-police our ranks and institute reforms in our sector. We are now implementing the various measures agreed at the Overseas Employment Summit on July 9, one of which is the Comprehensive Orientation Program for Performing Artists (COPPA), a two-day program where non-government organizations are involved as partners of the sector in educating our OPAs.

There is no doubt that because of the world-class caliber of Filipino entertainers, they could still qualify to enter and work in Japan even without the ARB / AAC.

However, documenting the experience of an OPA, particularly if the establishment the OPA has worked for in the Philippines in the past has closed shop, will prove to be problematic and difficult. And although there are enough entertainment venues in the country where an OPA could possibly work to gain experience, an already certified and qualified OPA would still need to work for two years before becoming eligible to enter Japan. Returning OPAs would undergo the same process.

An appeal for help

We respectfully appeal for the assistance of Her Excellency to intercede on our behalf by making the highest level representation with Japan on the matter.

We believe that with Her Excellency taking this action, there is hope that Japan will defer its proposal for five years, or opt for its gradual implementation.

We believe this is enough time to demonstrate to Japan the efficacy of the Philippine government's certification system and for us in our sector to continue to solidify and strengthen the reforms we have been implementing so that once and for all we could together remove the stigma that the misinformed and unknowing have attached to our OPAs

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Car bomb attacks in Najaf, Karbala kill at least 62 people

NAJAF, Iraq—Car bombs tore through a Najaf funeral procession and Karbala's main bus station, killing at least 62 people and wounding more than 120 in the two Shiite holy cities. In Baghdad, gunmen launched a bold ambush, executing three election officials, in their campaign to disrupt next month's parliamentary ballot.

IRAQIS view the destruction from the powerful car bomb attack in the holy city of Najaf Dec. 20. Suicide car bombers struck Iraq's two main Shiite holy cities of Najaf and Kerbala on Sunday, killing at least 62 people and wounding nearly 130, in coordinated attacks six weeks before a historic election. REUTERS

The deadly strikes Sunday highlighted the apparent ability of the insurgents to launch attacks almost at will, despite confident assessments by US military commanders that they had regained the initiative after last month's campaign against militants in Fallujah.

Families of victims of the twin attacks in Najaf and Karbala prepared Monday for the staging of multiple funerals, keeping in line with Islamic tradition to bury the dead within one day.

Police and Iraqi National Guard troops set up checkpoints throughout Najaf and increased numbers of security personnel checked identity documents of people in the city. Roads leading to the city's holy Imam Ali shrine were blocked; apparently out of fear of repeat attacks.

In the Baghdad attack Sunday, dozens of guerrillas—unmasked and apparently unafraid to show their faces—ran rampant over Haifa Street, a main downtown thoroughfare. They dragged the three election workers from a car, lay them on the street in the middle of morning traffic and shot them point-blank.

The bombings in Najaf and Karbala, which Shiite officials suspected were coordinated, were the deadliest attacks since July. They were a bloody reminder that the Shiite heartland in the south—not just the Sunni regions of central and northern Iraq—is vulnerable to the mainly Sunni insurgents aiming to wreck the vote.

Shiites, who make up around 60 percent of Iraq's population, have been strong supporters of the election, which they expect will reverse the longtime domination of Iraq by the Sunni Arab minority. The insurgency is believed to include many Sunnis who have lost prestige and privilege since Saddam Hussein's fall.

The persistent insurgent violence has already raised questions over whether residents of central and northern Iraq will be able to vote. If attacks scare away voters in the south as well, it would further undermine the first national ballot since Saddam was ousted.

In a message passed on by lawyers who visited him in his cell last week, Saddam denounced the elections as an American plot. *AP*

Controversy mounts over Rumsfeld's leadership

WASHINGTON—Policymakers in Washington Sunday debated whether embattled Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld should hold onto his job, as controversy continued to mount over his leadership of US military efforts in Iraq.

US Sen. Chuck Hagel became the latest in a steady stream of leading Republicans to express a lack of confidence in the Pentagon's top civilian official.

"I have no confidence in Rumsfeld," the Nebraska Republican and decorated Vietnam war hero told CBS television, although he stopped short of calling for the defense secretary's resignation, saying US President George W. Bush Bush must make that call.

Hagel called the US military's continued travails "a manifestation of a clear lack of cogent, clear, straight-talking planning in a post-Saddam Iraq," he said.

"We're in there now 21 months. Things are worse than they've ever been," said Hagel.

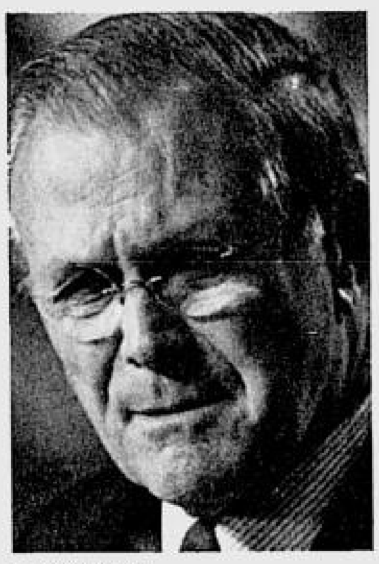
Rumsfeld has come in for a barrage of fresh criticism after admitting that he had not personally signed Pentagon condolence letters to families of soldiers killed in Iraq. But he has vowed to do so in the future, according to a Washington Post report Sunday.

"I wrote and approved the now more than 1,000 letters sent to family members and next of kin of each of the servicemen and women killed in military action," Rumsfeld said in a statement to the military newspaper Stars and Stripes.

"While I have not individually signed each one, in the interest of ensuring expeditious contact with grieving family members, I have directed that in the future I sign each letter," the defense chief said, according to the Post.

An outcry ensued after the Stars and Stripes reported in late November that the Pentagon was using a device to stamp Rumsfeld's signature on the letters, and quoted recipients who said they were insulted.

In recent days, several top Republicans, including senator and former presidential candidate John McCain, have recently criticized Rumsfeld, whom Bush has asked to stay on amid a cabinet re-shuffle following his November election victory. *AFP*



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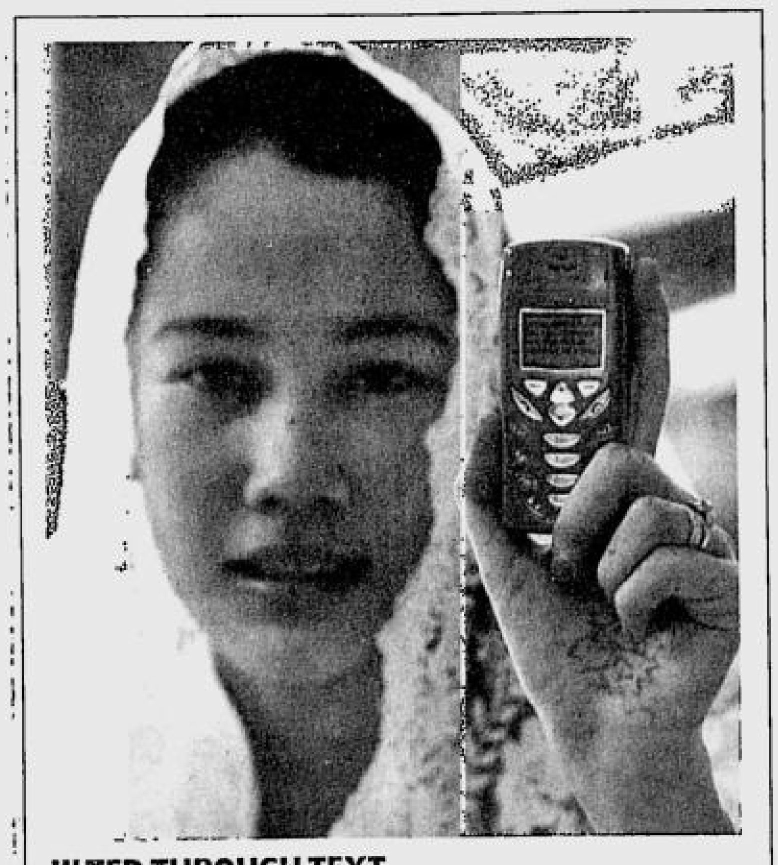

JILTED THROUGH TEXT

Norlida Abdul Rahman shows an SMS message from her fiance who backed out from their wedding in Johor Bharu, Dec. 19. The bridegroom, a football player for the state football team, broke off their engagement via an SMS message to Norlida's mobile phone. Despite the news the jilted bride and her family continued with the wedding feast. AFP

Mystery bidder grabs Yukos crown jewel as Russia dismantles oil firm

MOSCOW—A mystery bidder grabbed the crown jewel of Russian oil giant Yukos Sunday in an auction that destroyed the country's top private firm, handing it to a shell company seen as a front for the state-run gas monopoly Gazprom.

Defying an 11th-hour US legal order barring the sale, the Russian government sold off Yukos' flagship Siberian oil-pumping arm, Yuganskneftegaz, for $9.35 billion, to the previously unknown Baikalfinansgroup.

"Gentlemen, the shares are sold," said auctioneer Valery Suvorov.

The disposal represents a death blow for Yukos, whose ambitious billionaire founder Mikhail Khodorkovsky had built it into Russia's best-run company before he was arrested in October 2003 to face trial on fraud and tax evasion charges.

Yugansk pumps a million barrels a day, some 60 percent of Yukos' oil, and accounts for more than 70 percent of reserves of Russia's biggest oil producer.

Apart from Baikal—named after Siberia's huge Lake Baikal—Gazprom's oil unit Gazpromneft also was registered to participate in the auction, but it unexpectedly declined to submit a bid.

If the mystery winner, as widely believed, turns out to be a front for Gazprom, it would put a large slice of the energy industry back in government hands.

The purchaser of Yugansk overnight is acquiring reserves of 11.63 billion barrels of oil, 17 percent of Russia's total.

The world's largest gas producer, Gazprom is also merging with state oil firm Rosneft, and the combined entity would account for a fifth of Russian oil output and nearly all its gas production, making it the biggest global energy group.

Yukos has vowed to press legal charges against any new owner of Yugansk and company officials reiterated the sale was illegal.

"I think that the purchaser bought himself a $9-billion head-ache," spokesperson Alexander Shadrin was quoted as saying by Interfax.

Representatives of Baikal, officially registered in the central Russian region of Tver according to documents read out in the auction room, maintained a veil of secrecy after the sale.

But analysts said that it was a front, either for Gazprom alone or in combination with other state-friendly interests, adding that the gas giant may have been trying to shield itself from legal action by buying Yugansk through a shell company.

"It could be a shell company to protect Gazprom interests," said Chris Weafer, chief strategist at Alfa Bank.

Erik Kraus, chief strategist at Sovlink brokerage, suggested that talks Friday in Moscow between Gazprom chief Alexei Miller and his counterpart at the Chinese state oil firm CNPC might have yielded an agreement on a joint bid, giving CNPC a minority stake.

"The first certainty is that it is a group blessed by the Kremlin, and 99 percent of the assets will end up in Gazprom hands. But the question is Gazprom plus who?"

"The Chinese and the Indians (state oil and gas firm ONGC) were interested in bidding and they have nothing to fear from international legal action," he said. *AFP*

Bush named Time 'Person of the Year'

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush was named Time magazine's Person of the Year, after a reelection victory that he said was about the "use of American influence."

Officials from the magazine announced Sunday that Bush got the nod "for sticking to his guns (literally and figuratively), for reshaping the rules of politics to fit his ten-gallon-hat leadership style and for persuading a majority of voters this time around that he deserved to be in the White House for another four years,' managing editor Jim Kelly wrote.

In an interview with the newsmagazine, Bush acknowledged his critics here and internationally, but said a tough US foreign policy was more than warranted following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

"My presidency is one that has drawn some fire, whether it be at home or around the world. Unfortunately, if you're doing big things, most of the time you're never going to be around to see them (to fruition), whether it be cultural change or spreading democracy in parts of the world where people just don't believe it can happen," he said.

"I understand that. I don't expect many short-term historians to write nice things about me."

Time's year-end ritual comes as Washington prepares for Bush's inauguration ceremony next month, and as Baghdad prepares for elections the US president insists will go on despite unrelenting violence.

His clear victory over Democrat John Kerry in November stood in sharp contrast to the contrasted results in 2000, when the US Supreme Court ultimately halted legal battles over recounts of disputed ballots in the razor-tight race against Al Gore.

That left legions of Americans convinced that his presidency was illegitimate—doubts that receded after the September 11, 2001 attacks but surfaced again amid anger over the war on Iraq.

"The election was about this, this issue of the use of American influence," Bush told the magazine. *AFP*

Roche's cancer drug Avastin wins Swiss nod

ZURICH—Roche AG's colon cancer drug Avastin has been approved by Swiss medical authorities, paving the way for it to be launched in other European countries, the Swiss drug maker said on Monday.

Avastin, which works by starving cancers of their blood supply, has been approved as a first-line treatment for patients with metastatic cancer of the colon or rectum in combination with intravenous chemotherapy.

With peak annual sales estimated at between $870 million-$1.75 billion, the drug promises to help drive growth at Roche, the world's number one cancer drug producer thanks to products developed by its US biotechnology division Genentech.

Roche certificates, its most widely traded form of equity, rose 0.7 percent to 127.90 Swiss francs by 0814 GMT, extending gains from Friday when the stock bucked the downward trend in the drug sector on hopes it would gain from rivals' misfortunes.

Co-developed with Genentech, Avastin was approved in the United States in February and racked up sales of 450 million Swiss francs in its first seven months on the market.

Swiss approval for the drug, known generically as bevacizumab, had been expected and analysts are awaiting marketing approval from the European Union any time soon.

Avastin is also being tested for potential use in many other types of cancer that strike the kidney, pancreas, breast, lymph system, bladder, lung and prostate. *AP*

Jakarta to Thaksin: Show evidence on Thailand-based militants

JAKARTA—Thailand must provide evidence that Islamic militants in the country's restive south have been exposed to radical ideas in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, Jakarta's defense minister said on Monday.

Responding to a weekend statement by Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who said Thai militants had copied their counterparts in Indonesia, minister Juwono Sudarsono said Bangkok should not try to "corner" Indonesia over the issue.

"The problem is there must be strong legal evidence, intelligence information is not appropriate enough... For state affairs, there must be legal proof," Sudarsono told reporters.

Thaksin said Thai militants in the country's southern provinces also had links with militants in Malaysia, saying jungle across the borders of the two neighboring countries had been used as their training ground.

"Many who have strange behavior have imitated their radical friends in Indonesia," Thaksin said in his weekly radio address, adding that many of the militants had been to study Islam there.

Thaksin added, however, that the Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur governments had never supported the militants and were cooperating with Bangkok.

That was not enough for Sudarsono.

"We can understand Thaksin's worries over terror acts by militant groups," Sudarsono said. *Reuters*

Grenade found near Jakarta Hilton

JAKARTA—An unexploded grenade was found near the Hilton Hotel in Jakarta early Monday, police and hotel officials said, days after foreign governments warned that terrorists were planning attacks on Western targets ahead of Christmas.

Australia's warning last week was unusually specific, saying it had "credible information" that terrorists could be targeting the Hilton Hotel chain in the country. The United States, Britain, New Zealand and Japan also issued warnings but did not mention specific targets.

A gardener found the grenade near a fence surrounding the sprawling, five-star complex in the Indonesian capital, said Emeraldo Parengkuan, Hilton's public relations director.

"We called police and gave it to them," he said. "I think it's an effort to send a message to the whole country and show that the terrorist are still active in Jakarta or elsewhere in the country."

No one was hurt.

Police confirmed that a grenade had been found at the Hilton compound but could not say whether it had been activated. They also couldn't say who was responsible for it.

Since Thursday, security has been tightened at Indonesia's three Hilton hotels as well as shopping malls, churches and other hotels.

At the Jakarta Hilton, police armed with automatic weapons stood guard next to Christmas trees while employees have been instructed to report anything suspicious.

Parengkuan said the hotel had not seen a mass exodus of guests, but that some groups had canceled functions because of the threat.

The al-Qaida linked Jemaah Islamiyah terror group has been blamed for a string of terror attacks in the past three years, including the October 2002 Bali bombings, last year's blast at the J.W. Marriott hotel and the Sept. 9 Australian Embassy attack that have left a total of 224 people dead.

Despite scores of arrests, local police and foreign governments have repeatedly warned more attacks are likely. Several countries warn their citizens not to travel to Indonesia at all.

Jakarta has complained about the advisories, calling them unfair and saying they drive away tourists. *AP*

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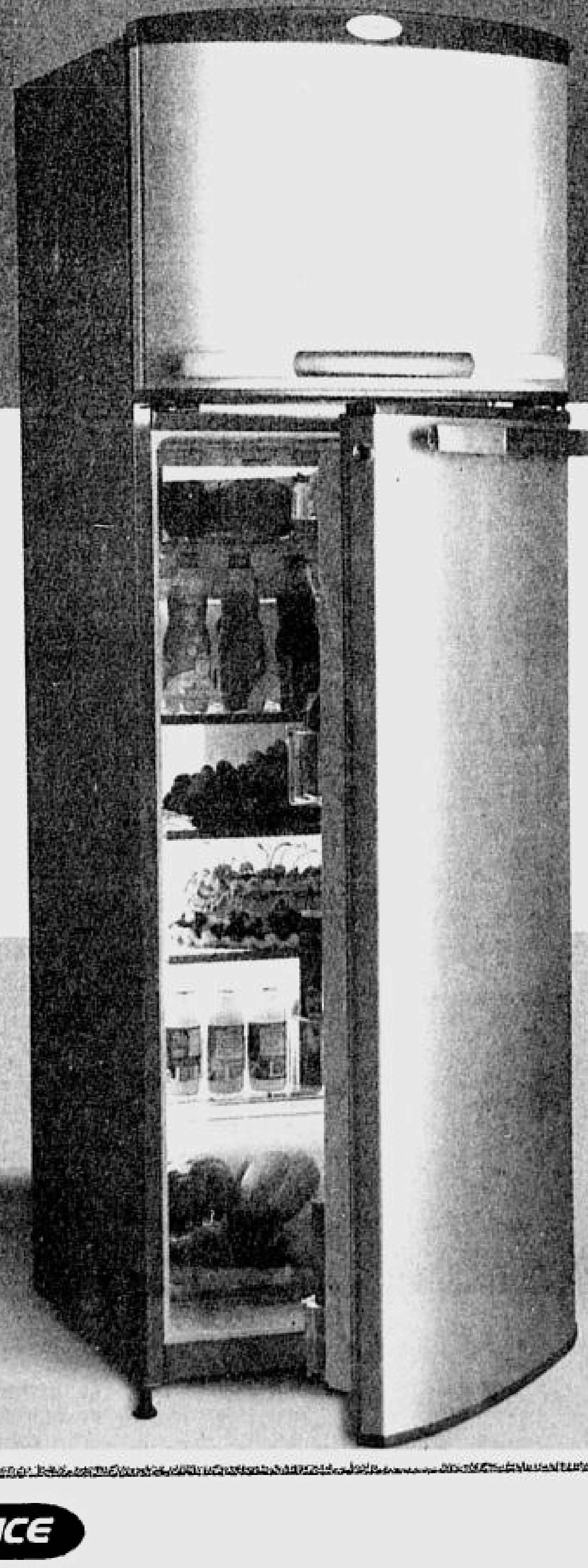

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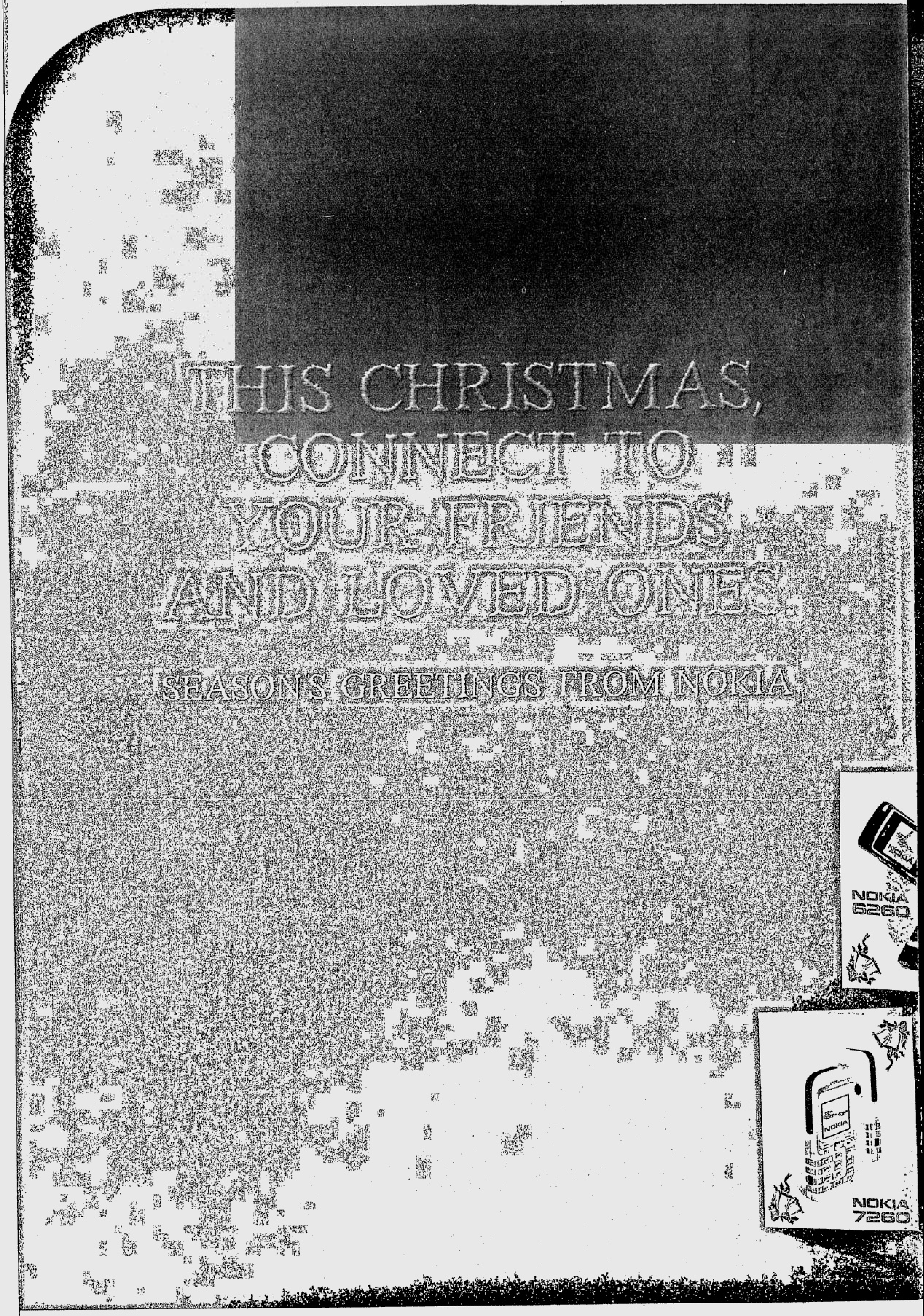
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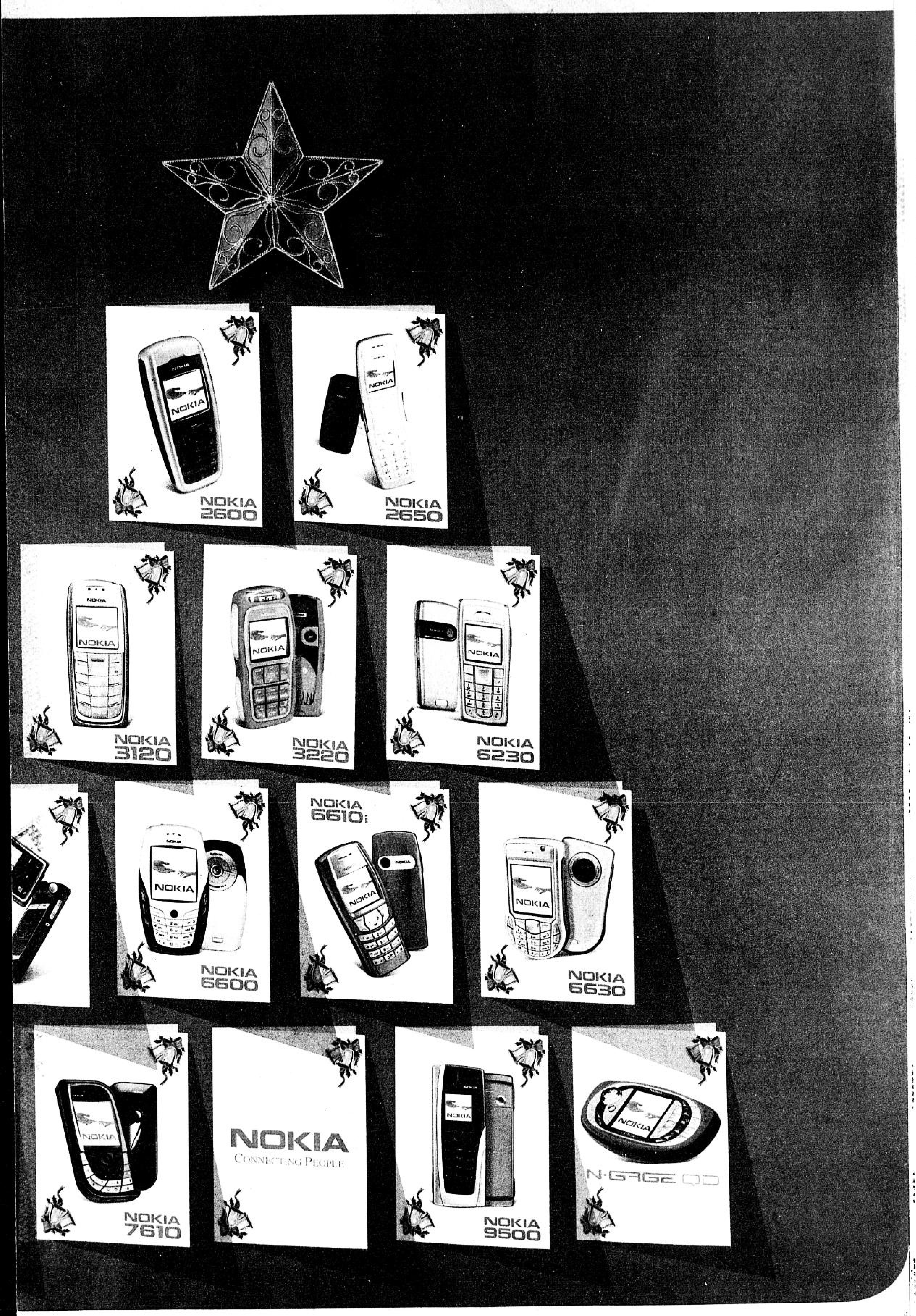

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•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
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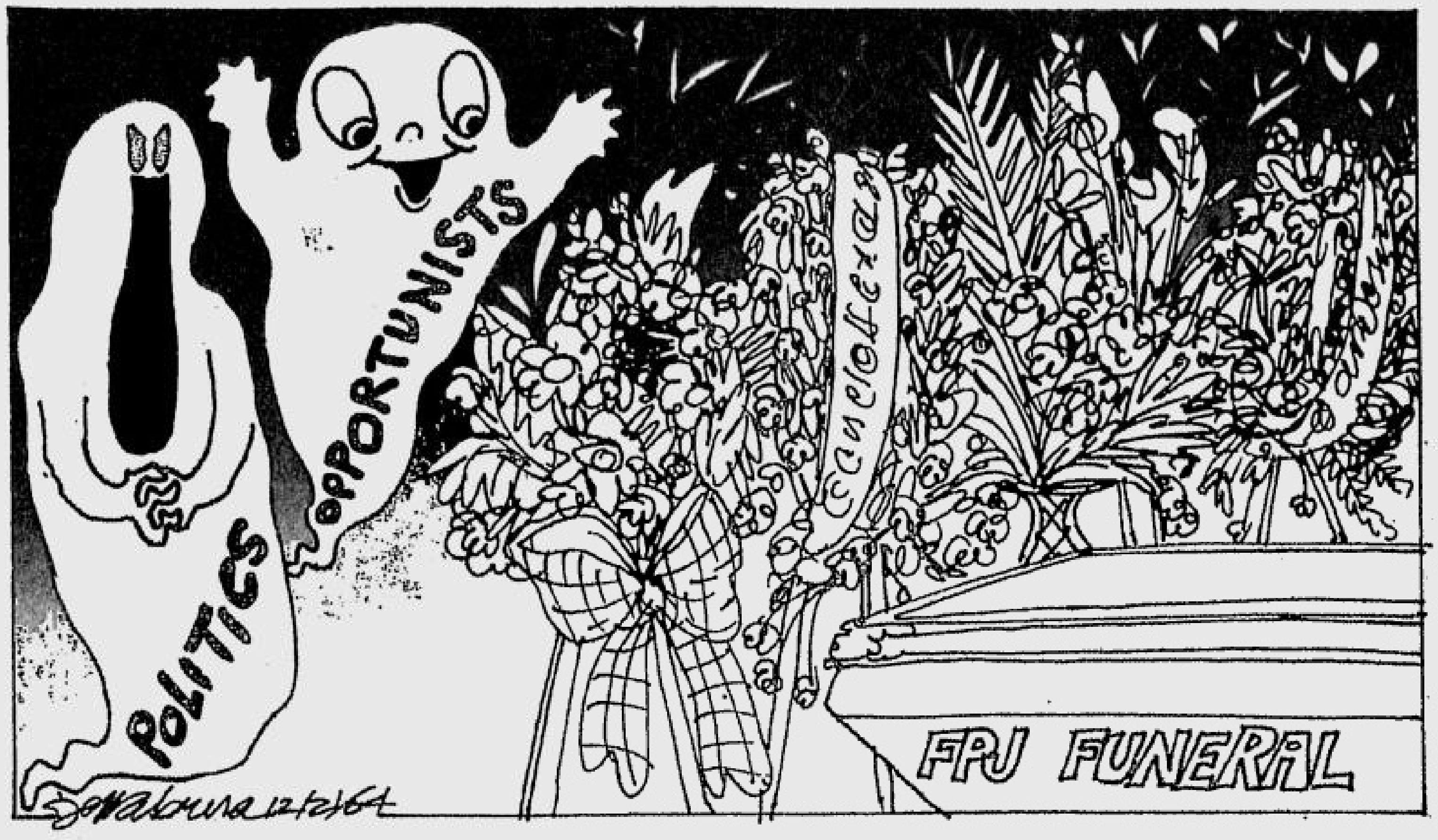

A widow's advice

EDITORIALS

WE would like to add our voice to the call of those who counsel against using the funeral of Fernando Poe Jr. to destabilize the government. The death of "Da King" has been politicized enough, and at this time when the nation is still reeling from widespread hardship and misery caused by an economic decline and disasters, we need political and social turmoil like we need a hole in the head.

Thus, it is well that the widow of FPJ, the dignified and level-headed Susan Roces, has called on his supporters to make sure that the funeral would not be tarnished by politics. The people who mourn the death of their idol would be honoring his memory best by heeding his widow's advice.

FPJ was a man of peace, despite the fact that he often portrayed violent personae in his movie roles. We believe that had he lived, he would have pursued through peaceful and legal means redress for what he believed was a wrong done to him through alleged cheating at the polls. If he had wanted to employ violent means, he could have roused his hundreds of thousands of fans and supporters to march and rise up against the Arroyo administration, but he did not do so.

The Philippine National Police is reported to be preparing at least 1,000 officers to keep the peace during the funeral march. The PNP would be well-advised to continue to adhere to a policy of maximum tolerance and to keep as low a profile as possible. Probably the police should wield only nightsticks and not firearms, to avoid a possible repeat of the killings that recently occurred during the Hacienda Luisita strike.

The fans and supporters of FPJ would also be rendering the nation a great service if they would police their ranks and make sure that no agents provocateurs from the Left or Right infiltrate them to cause trouble during what is supposed to be a dignified and solemn occasion. This was possible during the funeral march of the late Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. that was attended by an estimated two million people. We do not see any reason why a similar peaceful funeral march cannot be held for another very popular and charismatic figure.

A father's grief

THE SAD eyes and mournful countenance of Speaker Jose de Venecia said it all. His face showed the unbearable sorrow of a parent who had lost a dearly beloved child. Interviewed after the death of his daughter Maria Kristina Casimira (KC), De Venecia said that "she brought us so much happiness and so much joy…Next to my wife, she is the light of my life." Many people watching the televised interview could not help but shed tears in sympathy with the De Venecia couple who had suffered an ineffable loss.

Could KC's death have been avoided? If only she had gone out with her siblings instead of staying home that fateful night. If only her nanny had stayed with her in the same room. If only adequate safety precautions had been taken in stringing up the Christmas lights at the De Venecia mansion. If only there were no iron grills, or if they could have been easily opened from inside in an emergency. If only asbestos suits and other sophisticated fire-fighting equipment had been available so that firemen could have gone through the blazing inferno to rescue her. If…

The Speaker said he would file a measure providing for the purchase of asbestos suits for the fire departments of cities and towns. This, and other measures that would upgrade the firefighting ability and equipment of fire departments, should be given high priority on the legislative agenda. These things, as has been demonstrated by the De Venecia tragedy, literally mean the difference between life and death.

We are sure the great majority of congressmen would be willing to give up a substantial portion of their pork barrel to fund a measure that would improve the firefighting ability of firemen and modernize their equipment. Firemen from highly developed countries like the United States could be invited to Manila to teach our firefighters new techniques in fighting fires. Let's not wait for another De Venecia tragedy to strike before upgrading the firefighting capability of our firemen.

Salami-style interdicts

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"CRUDE threats by local martinets and subtle encroachment are directed against media, even as it struggles to upgrade professional standards…Officials swear they're partisans for liberty—but threaten to padlock critical stations or ban independent reporters."

That's not drug-riddled Colombia or thug-ruled Zimbabwe. That's Cebu, say journalists, who know the place like the back of their hands, in a pooled editorial titled, "Dreams in a time of trouble." Cebu's newspapers and stations came up with this hard-nosed assessment during their September Press Freedom Week celebration.

Now, two metro mayors have ratcheted discriminatory pressure on press members who don't join their political parades. In so doing, they've confirmed that evaluation.

American and Filipino agents busted one of Southeast Asia's largest drug factories in Mayor Thadeo Ouano's Mandaue City. In "the Philippines' shabu capital," Ouano, his cops, barangay and building officials told a wishy-washy House committee they knew nothing, heard nothing and said nothing. Just like the proverbial three monkeys?

But even simians can get midnight adrenalin. Mandaue suddenly did to ABS-CBN's regional station what it spared their *shabu* factory: It issued a notice of illegal electrical connection.

That dyAB, the network's AM station, had raked over Ouano and Co. for the drug scandal was coincidental, Ouano said. "OBO's notice was not intended to harass ABS-CBN…The city issued similar notices to 20 companies."

"There is never a paucity of arguments in favor of limiting press freedom," US Supreme Court Justice Stewart Potter once wryly observed.

Next door, Mayor Tomas Osmeña announced he'd ban the GMA network from covering the January Sinulog grand parade at the Cebu City Sports Center. This is a public event, in an official site with P8-million taxpayers' contribution. But GMA's dySS features the multi-awarded Bobby Nalzaro, a critic of the mayor.

But the ban is "very mild," Osmeña protested. Anyway, he claims "the power to close and cancel the franchise of GMA 7." He'd padlock the station for refusing to accept the paid ads of the city which has P1.7 million in unpaid IOUs. A settle-debts-first policy of the Kapisanan Ng Brodkasters, which GMA-7 implemented, is censorship, he claimed.

No kidding? Last I heard the authority that grants or cancel franchises rests exclusively with Congress. Any mayor who arrogates that power to himself faces the business end of a usurpation suit.

But habits die hard. In 1996, then private citizen Tomas Osmeña signed, on behalf of Metro Cebu Development project, official loan papers with the Japanese government. Sen. John Osmeña threatened to clobber him with a "usurpation of official functions" suit.

Access to news event is absolutely fundamental to journalists. Thus, in Subido v. Ozaeta, the Supreme Court ruled that constitutional protection covers access.

Jurisprudence in democratic countries echoes that principle. In Hawaii, the US district court struck down Mayor Frank Fasi's ban against reporters of the Honolulu Star Bulletin reporters attending his press conferences. "Only compelling government interests" can prop up such bans, it said.

But Osmeña claims he can bestow or withhold, at whim, access to news. This is constitutional nonsense. A basic human right cannot be held hostage to personal vendettas. The Charter's provision on the press is not hemmed in by qualifications.

"There are absolutes in our Bill of Rights," US Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black wrote. "They were put there on purpose by men who knew what words meant, and meant that the prohibitions were absolute."

Osmeña used the same argument to ban, in 2001, reporters of dyHP, Sun Star and Radyo Bombo from City Hall press conferences. He cribbed that from the often-soused Joseph Estrada who denied INQUIRER reporters access to Malacañang press conferences. Pakistan's Nawar Sharif also banned the Jang newspaper. Sharif is in exile. And Estrada is in the clink.

These are discriminatory interdicts. They differ from Marcos' brass-knuckle padlocking of the press in its obviousness, and are cruder than arm-twisting behind the scenes. The mayor's late father, then Gov. Sergio Osmeña, muzzled the independent Southern Star by asking the daily's owners: "*Somos o no somos*" (Are you with me or against me?)

The governor pressured firms to yank out their ads from the Republic Daily, owned by the Cuencos. Decades later, Joseph Estrada prodded first his movie industry buddies, then businessmen to cut ads for the INQUIRER. That flopped too.

Nonetheless, Osmeña and Ouano barrel into salami-slicing of press freedoms. "The greatest danger to liberty," US Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis once wrote, "lurks in the encroachments by men of zeal, well-meaning but without understanding."

Journalism "is not a comfortable profession for fat cats," Guardian editor Peter Preston told an International Press Institute meeting. "We write or broadcast to make sure the world knows what is happening in what would otherwise be dark recesses of people behaving at their worst."

Some do the task brilliantly. Others just get by. Some are incompetent and should be fired. A number sell out or, as the late publisher Eugenio Lopez once said, "serve as megaphones for the powerful."

But journalists are "prisoners of a necessary cause." Our craft is "a barricade where we encounter opposition, confusion, sometimes personal peril," Preston writes. "But you have to be on the side of (liberty of expression), because there is no other side to be on."

* * *

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Mere justice will do

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

FRANKLY, I can't understand what Malacañang meant to accomplish by proposing that FPJ be turned into a national artist and/or be buried in Libingan ng mga Bayani. I got a lot of text messages from people, some of whom had been GMA supporters during the elections, saying GMA was looking more and more ridiculous trying everything to stem the tide of sympathy for FPJ and an accompanying tide of antipathy toward her.

I could only agree. It only served to highlight the contrast between honesty and dishonesty, sincerity and insincerity, which was already forming in the public's mind, with government occupying the second part of the dichotomy. "*Kaplastikan*" was the word Susan Roces and several others used to describe those who materialized at the wake looking grief-stricken after stabbing FPJ in the back during the elections. The word echoed deafeningly with the proposal to turn FPJ into national artist and hero.

It doesn't appease enemies, it only pisses off friends. It only adds national artists and heroes, or the kin of national artists and heroes since most national artists and heroes are dead almost by definition, to the list of enemies.

I know FPJ did a lot of movies, probably more than any other Filipino movie star, and I know that he captured the Filipino imagination by portraying characters his countrymen could relate to. When we were kids we spoke his name with reverence, far more than we did Erap's and Bernard Bonnin's (who portrayed Gagamba, Alyas Palos, Kapten Barbel, and other comic book heroes), and imagined ourselves to be him when we played our war, cowboy and other children's games. He was the quintessential Filipino hero: humble, soft-spoken, respectful of elders, but a veritable lion when pushed to the wall. And of course one possessed of heroic or magical abilities.

But I don't know that these things alone qualify anyone to become a national artist. Unfortunately, FPJ was also trapped by his own popularity. He could not get past his heroic image and essay more complex, or indeed more real, characters. He couldn't even die in his movies without alienating his public. What endeared him to the public was also what distanced him from true art, the kind Erap and especially Dolphy ventured into when they became more established. One may have more of a case proposing Dolphy as national artist.

Let us honor FPJ, but let us not dishonor Nick Joaquin, Lino Brocka and Antonio Molina.

Who knows? Maybe Malacañang threw the proposal as bait, hoping to enrage the artistic community should FPJ's kin and friends bite. Well, they didn't.

As to being proclaimed a hero, I know that FPJ was a hero not just to the legions of folk he had helped in the movies but in real life. He was a savior to many of his friends, not the least of them the least of the people in show biz, or the ones who tend to be ignored in the division of spoils at the end of a movie. He was good to the crew, the stuntmen, the gofers, becoming *ninong* at their weddings and baptisms, taking care of their hospital bills, and being there in their hour of need. He himself had started below, working as a stuntman before he worked his way up. He knew what it meant to be hungry.

But as I wrote only last week, about the six people who have just been added to the Wall of Remembrance in the Bantayog ng mga Bayani (Lean Alejandro, Joe Burgos, Jun Celestial, Paula Malay, Laverne Mercado, Bobbit Sanchez), though heroes, are ordinary folk like us, they are also ordinary folk who have done extraordinary things by glimpsing the need to serve the people. Heroism is more than beneficence or generosity, it is courage and self-sacrifice. It is pushing back the limits of the possible. It is fighting tyranny, it is struggling to build a new world, even at cost to life and limb.

Let us honor FPJ, but let us not dishonor Lean, Joe, Jun, Ayi, Laverne and Bobbit.

In any case, it is completely unnecessary. FPJ's kin never sought it, and FPJ himself would have been unhappy with it. He was an unpretentious man, his wife, Susan Roces, recalls. He was never one to make himself out as something he was not. He knew his limitations, which is more than can be said for others who are without accomplishment.

More to the point, it misses the point completely. It is giving a new pair of eyes to someone who is missing his feet. Unlike his chief rival in the elections, FPJ never lacked attention or has been *kulang sa pansin*. At least in the eyes of the public. For unlike his chief rival in the elections, too, FPJ has lacked attention from the Comelec and Congress. Both took him to not exist at all, the first ignoring the gross violations of electoral rules being committed openly by his chief rival, the second railroading the count on the ground that this country would die if it did not have a new president soon. It forgot that this country would die sooner if it had the wrong president.

I do not know if FPJ or GMA won the elections. But that is the problem precisely: we do not know who did. That the Comelec and Congress decreed GMA did so does not settle the question, it only unsettles our mind about the nature of the Comelec and Congress. FPJ has every right to pursue his protest, and I hope his followers do so amid all talk that it would destabilize the country. The pursuit of truth has never destabilized a country, the defense of a lie has. Cory's quest for a recount after the snap elections did not destabilize the country, Marcos' defense of a crooked election and a moor crooked rule did so.

Ah, but it is no small irony that in this country death is the loudest whisper of all. To get listened to, you have to die first.

Never mind more accolades and honors for FPJ. Mere justice will do.

Postpone award for FPJ

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

IT would be a good idea for Malacañang to postpone the conferment on the late Fernando Poe Jr. of the Presidential Medal of Merit to February next year, as this would help cool the understandable partisan passions arising from his sudden demise. By early next year, we hope, the award would be-appreciated for its real worth, as a tribute to a great artist of the people.

The Palace mulled over the conferment of presidential awards on late artists, who died in succession and who had contributed significantly to the development of their respective fields, namely, FPJ for Filipino movies, the late Zeneida Amador for theater and the late George Canseco for music. Honors for Amador and Canseco were already being contemplated by the Palace, but when FPJ suddenly died, Cecile Guidote Alvarez, executive director of the National Commission on Culture and the Arts, proposed that the King of RP movies be similarly honored. The President was said to have liked the idea, since she has always recognized FPJ as a cinema icon even before they became arch-rivals in politics.

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But since the proposed award for FPJ assumed some political color, it would be a good idea if the Palace postponed the award-giving ceremony to February. *Sayang naman* if partisan passions would distort the true value of the singular recognition being conferred on FPJ, Bibot Amador and George Canseco. If Bibot were around, she would doubtless agree to a February date.

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At the simple but elegant ceremonies in Malacañang last Dec. 15, the President conferred the Presidential Awards for Filipino Individuals and Organizations Overseas for 2004 on 34 individuals and organizations. Dr. Sariel Ablaza, one of the recipients of the Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino Award, who gave the response on behalf of the awardees, summarized the motivation of his colleagues in two four-letter words, "Love" and "Care." The Hagonoy-born cardio-thoracic surgeon based in New Jersey, USA, said, "It is pure love for our country and our needy countrymen, which is the driving force for whatever we did overseas." But one without the other is useless, he added.

* * *

The group Dr. Ablaza once chaired, the Philippine Economic and Cultural Endowment-USA, has demonstrated this love and care mainly in the form of more than 400 artesian wells it constructed from Ilocos to Jolo. On his own, Ablaza has helped his alma mater, the UP College of Medicine, by serving as "balik professor," setting up scholarships for poor but deserving medical students and founding the first professorial chair at the UP College of Medicine to be set up by an individual. This, in turn, inspired other alumni to support more than 80 professorial chairs in that college.

* * *

Ablaza recalled that as a barefoot teenage school boy, he used to sell sampaguita garlands in the back alleys of Caloocan or hanging from the *estribo* of Pambusco buses to support himself through school. Little did he think that one day he would merit the presidential award.

The success stories of Ablaza and other awardees, who came from humble backgrounds but distinguished themselves in various professions overseas, should inspire the younger generation of Filipinos to strive harder.

* * *

For last Sunday evening's dzRH program co-hosted by Cecile Alvarez and myself, and next Sunday, we interviewed three other overseas Filipino awardees. As I said earlier, what runs through them like a common thread is their love for their native land and their desire to help their countrymen here and abroad. For instance, Banaag Awardee Evelyn de Asis-Natividad, 55, an educator from Samar who works in the Chicago public high school system, and her husband, sanitary engineer Cornelio Natividad, who won the same award in 2002, have helped put RP on the map in Chicago. Evelyn spearheaded the campaign to raise $60,000 to support the marine exhibit during the unveiling of the replica of our famed Apo Island in Negros Oriental, now a lead attraction in Chicago's John G. Shedd Aquarium. The Natividads, who are active in advancing the civil rights of Filipino old-timers and promoting the rich cultural traditions of Asian minorities, also helped in installing the 11-foot monument of Dr. Jose Rizal in a prominent area of Chicago—the only monument to an Asian hero there.

* * *

On the other hand, a 37-year-old Filipino doctor named Jovelle Laoag-Fernandez, a graduate of St. Louis University Medical School in Baguio City, has blazed the trail in Kobe, Japan, as a recognized clinical researcher in the field of obstetrics and gynecology. Arriving there in 1998 as a Japanese government scholar and research fellow, she began her doctoral studies there. Her research and studies in obstetrics and gynecology as well as in ovarian and cervical cancer and its therapy earned her various honors, as well as a position as research assistant in Kobe University's Graduate School of Medicine. She also conducts seminars for Japanese nurses and midwives, teaching them how to manage patients, especially Filipino women married to Japanese. She made Japanese doctors realize that Filipino patients are a "very touching" people, in that they like to feel the touch of their doctor's hand, unlike the reserved Japanese.

It was a singular honor for this young Filipina to crash into and be accepted by Japan's relatively closed society, especially in the field of medicine, and Jovelle is all admiration for the modern anti-cancer technology she learned in Japan. But despite this, she and her husband, also a medical graduate of St. Louis, plan to pack up and return to Manila in the near future. She plans to set up a clinical research office here on endocrinology and reproductive health. She feels this is one area that has been neglected here.

Oustanding Fil-Canadians

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

CANADIAN Ambassador Peter Sutherland hosted a lunch last week to honor Filipino-Canadians who were among those recognized as outstanding overseas Filipinos by the Philippine government last week.

Honored in rites held last Dec. 15 in Malacañang were Arturo Viola, currently deputy Lord Mayor of Niagara-on-the Lake; Alicia Natividad, the first Filipino to be admitted to the Ontario bar; and two cultural groups, the Fiesta Filipina Dance Troupe of Canada and the Panday Tinig Chorale Ensemble.

Born and raised in Santiago, Isabela, Viola emigrated to Canada in 1967 and retired in 1994 from his post at the Niagara-on-the-Lake General Hospital. Unlike most folk whose retirement marks a retreat from most involvements, Viola used his free time to volunteer for various causes and this became the natural springboard for a foray into politics. Well-known and liked, he ran for alderman (councilor) in 1994, winning the highest number of votes which qualified him for the post of deputy Lord Mayor.

In the next elections, Viola won a three-way race for Lord Mayor, becoming the first Asian and Filipino to clinch the post. In 1998, he also accepted the honorary chairmanship of the fundraising committee for the Niagara Regional Native Centre, raising $5 million for the center's self-proficiency drive.

Though he left politics in 2000, Viola continued to be involved in civic affairs, deciding to run for public office again in 2003 and making a comeback as deputy Lord Mayor. In recognition of his "significant contribution to Canada, to (his) community or to (his) fellow Canadians," Viola was conferred the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal last year.

* * *

NATIVIDAD is one of the founders of the Canada Philippines Business Council, which is geared toward promoting trade and economic relations between the Philippines and Canada. Currently the council's president, she has organized business forums, seminars and receptions focusing on economic and trade opportunities in the Philippines. As part of her work with the council, she spearheaded the conduct of business conferences in support of the official state visits of then President Fidel V. Ramos in 1997, and President Macapagal-Arroyo in 2002, as well as visits of other officials from the Philippines.

Aside from her work promoting business and investor relations between Canada and the Philippines, Natividad is also an avowed feminist, devoting her time to volunteer work with women's organizations and to Nelson House, a shelter for women and children survivors of violence.

I also know Alice as the sister of Irene Natividad, who is like her a feminist deeply involved in social and political causes, and who has been quite active in promoting Filipino-American relations, mainly through the Filipino-American Foundation based in Washington, D.C. I guess feminism, civic involvement and ties to the Philippines run in the family!

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COMMENTING on the recognition given the Panday Tinig Choral Ensemble, Ambassador Sutherland noted that "anytime outstanding Filipinos are recognized, we know musical artists have to be among them!"

The Panday Tinig Choral Ensemble is a celebrated Filipino-Canadian chóir, whose members are Filipinos based in Montreal and its surrounding suburbs. Though none of the members ever underwent formal training in voice or music, they are all devoted to "refining the art of choral singing," as proclaimed in the choir's name, which combines the Filipino terms *panday* (craftsman) and *tinig* (voice).

The choral ensemble was assembled by pianist Editha Fedalizo in 1985 and immediately made a mark in multicultural events and productions such as the Asian Heritage Festival, Chinese Gardens' Summer Festival and Drummondville Choral Festival. Hoping to develop the talents of Filipino-Canadian youth, Panday Tinig also formed Salingsing, a children's choir, in 1991. Panday Tinig has sung for a documentary film for the Canadian National Film Board as well as for an educational CD, an honor that makes all Filipinos in Canada proud. In 2001, the group released a CD recording of Filipino folk songs, "Pinagkawing Himig Pilipino," which is registered and filed in the Canadian National Library. The ensemble has also performed in Carnegie Hall in New York.

* * *

THE FIESTA Filipina Dance Troupe of Canada, based in Toronto, has performed in the Philippines but representatives of the group eagerly agreed with Ambassador Sutherland when he said the embassy should look for means to bring them back again, perhaps together with Panday Tinig, which has yet to perform before a local audience.

Explaining why he decided to host a get-together at his residence, with embassy staff and some media and business people in attendance, the ambassador said it was the least he could do after the Philippine government had honored his countryfolk at a Malacañang reception.

Once again, the awards prove that not only are Filipinos capable of rising to prominence and achievement while living on foreign shores (there were 45 awardees, living in different parts of the world), they are also able to retain their ties to the home country, to use their personal resources to strengthen ties between the Philippines and their adopted countries.

Perhaps we can say that overseas Filipinos, whose wanderlust has brought them to even some of the remotest corners of the globe, are the glue that bind our country to most other nations, proving by their hard work, industry, ability and good nature that Filipinos have much to contribute to the building of their nations, both of birth and of citizenship.

Connecting people

COMMENTARY

Junefe Gilig Payot
Institute on Church and Social Issues

THE THEME of connecting people kept recurring to me the entire month that I stayed in the Netherlands to study land management and informal settlements regularization.

First, there were the 21 course participants coming from 10 developing countries who not only had to travel great distances to study together at the Institute on Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS) in Rotterdam but also had to overcome cultural and personal differences, the latter being the more difficult to do. Also, loved ones regularly called or sent me SMS (as they call text messages in that part of Europe) to make sure I was fine amid the cold Dutch autumn. And when I bought fruits at the weekly Blaak market (there's no spelling error here: the name of the place is really Blaak and it's perfectly legal) guess what they were wrapped with? An Oct. 2, 2002 copy of the Philippine Daily Inquirer! I thought the INQUIRER should add "Connecting People" to its slogan "Balanced News, Fearless Views." But Nokia might already have a patent to it.

A weekend visit to Berlin also reinforced this theme in my mind. For what can be a more dramatic act of connecting people than the fall of the Berlin Wall, 15 years ago last November? Moreover during my stay there, European Union leaders signed an agreement that they hope will lead to the adoption of a common constitution for EU countries and all their people.

But it was inside the classroom that the theme of connecting people was repeatedly emphasized by our lecturers through the concept of socio-spatial integration in urban management. Basically, it means that for a city to truly work, all communities must have access to economic, social, cultural, political and recreational opportunities and facilities existing within the city.

Unfortunately, this is not true in many, if not most, cities around the world. In the Philippines, for example, we have hundreds of thousands of families living in informal settlements. These families struggle to be economically, socially, culturally, politically and physically integrated into our cities and although they have made some progress over the years through sheer hard work, tenacity and creativity, there is a long way yet to go for them.

The "trolley," which families living along the rail tracks use to transport goods and people from their illegally built houses to the city centers, is a very concrete symbol of this creative struggle to be socio-spatially integrated. When I showed the other participants a picture of it, they marveled at the ingenuity of the Filipino poor. They were so amazed by it that much of the question-and-answer portion after my report was spent explaining to them how it works. Some even asked me for pictures of it! Thanks to the trolley, I had my 15 minutes of fame.

Rotterdam itself was a very appropriate venue to talk about integration. Its famous symbol, the Erasmusbrug or Erasmus bridge named after the great humanist who was born there, was made to connect its northern and southern parts, which for long had been different economically and socially (the South being looked down upon as poor, filthy, and lacking in culture) but are now making progress at integration. The whole city is much better now because of it.

This is a very basic but often neglected concept in housing and urban management. But it has become more important here in the Philippines in light of the massive relocation of families to be affected by the $503-million NorthRail project. There is no question that this infrastructure project will have positive long-term national impact. But along with this national interest are the interests of the families whose lifetimes of investment born of hard work and creativity will be swept away by their relocation.

According to Michael Cernea, an acknowledge expert on relocation, a phenomenon known as "engineering bias," i.e, an overwhelming concern to complete civil construction that blinds planners to the social needs of resettled people, often occurs. And thus, socio-spatial integration is not given much consideration in relocation, resulting in socio-spatial segregation instead and more impoverishment.

This is not the first time that relocation on such a scale has happened here but it's the first time that it is being talked about, maybe because it involves billions of pesos. And money, of course, never fails to get our politicians' attention. But the project should get attention because we are talking about the lives of tens of thousand of poor families.

Some opposition senators think that too much money might have been budgeted for relocation alone. I don't know how much money is needed to relocate tens of thousands of families. But I do know that enough money should be set aside to make sure that wherever they will be relocated, the families will be socio-spatially integrated to their host city through complete health, educational and transport facilities and access to basic utilities and livelihood opportunities. Otherwise, we will just be recreating new slums in another place.

It is sad but true that in spite of 50 years of experience in relocation, the Philippines has not really learned how to do proper and humane relocation. To use the words of a relocated mother from an earlier government project, *"Basta na lang kami itinapon dito" Tapon* is a word we associate only with garbage and exiles.

Many hope that the relocation of the families along the railroad tracks will be done well this time, especially with Vice President Noli de Castro himself at the helm. If not, it would be the height of irony that a railway project that is supposed to connect people and bring about development would cause the segregation and marginalization of thousands.

Busy people

YOUNG BLOOD

Leslie Lim

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

IT is 23 days before Christmas as I write. There's a Christmas party on Friday, a friend's wedding on the eighth of the month, a *despedida* party on the eleventh, a nephew's birthday on the twelfth… Huh? No dates?

Okay, so it's December! So what? My life will still be the same—same old work that sucks, same people I see everyday, same old places I go to every day. My life couldn't be more predictable and ordinary as it is now. Doesn't this jungle where I play have a little surprise for me?

I wake up one day wondering what the day would be like. I think of the opportunities that lie ahead. On the street, I pass a man lying on one corner of a waiting shed. He slept there through the cold night. Who knows if he has eaten. I ask myself: What will that man's Christmas be like? With all the Christmas lights and festive decorations all over the place, why is a person his age living alone in the street? Where is his family? Is anyone waiting for him to come home? Do they know he's out here? Or do they care at all?

As I get on my way, I notice that it's a quarter past eight! I have to hurry or I won't get to the office on time. I take a cab. There's the usual traffic. Vehicles going in different directions. People walking, hurrying. They are somewhat like me: always in a hurry and not minding small things that could make a difference in my life. Busy people. Busy streets.

I tell the driver we have reached my office. I look at the meter and pay. The guard gives me his usual greeting, "Good morning, *Ganda*!" And I reply, "Good morning *po, Manong*," and smile.

At the 12th floor lobby, the receptionist greets me, "Good morning, Ma'am!" I return the greeting with a smile.

It's a typical morning, I tell myself. But would anyone greet me with the same enthusiasm if I were not the person I am now? I shrug my shoulders and congratulate myself for making it on time.

I go through the lounge and peep into the pantry to check if any of my bosses is taking his breakfast or reading the morning newspaper. I go inside our office and proceed to my table.

I consider myself to be meticulous. I plan my day and do things according to schedule. A friend once told me I am "OC"—obsessive compulsive, that is.

I open my PC and check my mail. Some mails I would rather not read. Others are company memos. One mail is from a friend whom I haven't seen for almost a year now. I open the last and read. It turns out that she has broken up with her boyfriend of two years. I remember them as a sweet couple. I was a witness to how their relationship developed and grew. And now it has come to an end because of the distance separating them. Long-distance relationships are difficult to keep. It's sad that they have to break up, but I can't make decisions for them. I give my friends the freedom to decide for themselves without being judgmental.

I write my response, and begin to think of my own experience. I have given up a three-year relationship in order to have my individuality, my freedom. Well, as people say, nothing lasts forever. Two people meet, get to know each other, bond and then decide to separate. Free individuals in a free society.

I went on with my daily routine. I check the documents on my tray and sort them out. I process them and forward them to the next department. But even before I am done with the first batch, another set of documents comes in. My work seems endless. It's as if I am not accomplishing anything.

The phone rings and someone makes known his complaints or wants to follow up something. Most of them are annoying, but a few are nice. Some people can be fair, but most seem incapable of being so. I tend to be skeptical. I don't give my trust fully. I would feel comfortable if I knew I am surrounded by selfless people, but that's impossible. Let's just say we interact with people of different personalities, backgrounds and values.

I can say I am an idealist. I want to set an example of doing what I believe in. But people are free to think and believe what is best for them. And most will choose what is most convenient for them.

It's almost six. My day is coming to an end. As usual, I am left behind, in the silence of the office. When I finally finish my work, I sit back on my chair feeling tired.

I catch sight of the Christmas tree on the corner. I look through the office window and see Christmas lights and ornaments decorating other buildings. The Christmas season is here. Soon there will be the traditional Misa de Gallo.

What is so special with Christmas? I ask myself. December 25 is the same as the other days of the year. It doesn't make any difference. People will still be the same the day after, with no sign of transformation.

I look again at the Christmas tree. It's beautiful, with all its decorations. The lights are delightful to the eyes. They seem to tell me that I should be happy, like most other people. I look around the now empty room. People are out buying gifts. The pantry is full of Christmas giveaways. But I haven't bought any gifts yet. Would I bother? What difference does it make?

My thoughts drift back to the man I saw this morning. Did anyone offer him food? Or invite him home on cold nights? We are no different from the people who threw out Mary and Joseph that night in Bethlehem. We flinch at that thought, but we do it unconsciously. We are so good at complimenting ourselves that we are not like them, but we are. Why should I spend a whole day decorating a five-foot Christmas tree when I can't spend an hour with my family? Why do I spend so many hours working overtime to earn some extra money instead of finding value in doing other things like strengthening ties with family and friends? Why do I have to spend long nights alone, sick and depressed when I can call up my mom and everything will be all right? Why do I have to do things just because other people do them? Why do I complain about my daily misfortunes instead of being grateful that I have work which keeps me financially able? But even what I earn doesn't pay in full for what I am missing in my life. And I am missing a lot.

I guess that is what we are. We value things that may give us rewards. We tend to measure success by how much we achieve and receive materially rather than find value in what is essential. We tend to treat people nicely if we think they will help us achieve instead of giving everyone what he deserves or what rightfully belongs to him. If we go back to the origin of Christmas and find its true meaning, we won't waste our time doing so much unnecessary stuff. Love, simplicity and the spirit of sharing will guide our every action even if it is not the Christmas season.

I pull myself back to reality. I hear the city noises in the background. Hmmm, this has been another day. I clear my desk, turn off the light and leave the office.

Leslie Lim, 23, is a BS Accountancy graduate of The University of the Assumption.

FPJ's popularity mirrors our people's aspirations

THE CONCERNED Artists of the Philippines joins the fans and supporters of Fernando Poe Jr. in mourning his death.

FPJ was not "just a movie actor," he was an actor. He may have only played the role of the protector of the weak and the oppressed and of the leader who was selfless and compassionate. But wanting and needing in their real life this kind of protector and leader with this kind of qualities, people flocked to watch his movies.

FPJ, the action king, played characters with magical powers, subduing greedy antagonists who reigned through deceit and harassment. In real life, magic is used to count ballots; and power is in the hands of corrupt politicians and brutal landlords. The masses, subdued and disempowered—physically and culturally—dreamed of "*wish-ko-lang*" strength to break the chains and strike back.

FPJ's characters gave them hope that someday they'd gain this strength to overpower the oppressors. For FPJ's movies were woven with plots close to the hearts and aspirations of the Filipino masses and to the realities in which they live. These were stories of the triumph of integrity over deceit, the straight over the crooked, the weak over the strong.

The number of his fans and supporters speaks a lot about the aspirations of our people.

FPJ, the king, is dead. But his stories will finally live in reality. As the political and economic situation worsens, the stage for struggle and liberation will be set; the oppressed will triumph over the oppressor—this time, without magic, just sheer strength in the magnitude of the organized masses.

—JULIE L. PO,
secretary general,
Concerned Artists of the Philippines,
65A 10th Ave., Cubao, Quezon City

Our loss, not FPJ's

THE COLUMN of Rina Jimenez-David was insightful and carefully written. (PDI, 12/15/04) However, in reference to the last portion, the political tragedy in our country is not with FPJ but with the kind of politics and leaders we have. The political experience of "Da King" is our loss, not his. He attempted to take up the challenge of a job that our so-called experts, intellectuals and- politicians have failed to address for decades. We could have been blessed with a president who had the political will to say no to big interest groups and influence peddlers, to genuinely address the demands of the underprivileged, and to undertake programs based on a sincere concern for our people.

—NORBERTO ELEAZAR MEDINA,
noel@netserve.ph

A matter of self-defense

OUR gold, copper, bauxite and other mineral resources are the last frontiers in our people's defense of our patrimony. The Supreme Court decision last Dec. 1 allowing foreigners to take out our minerals for a song will dry up our rivers, desertify our lands and render our homeland uninhabitable. The recent devastation caused by unabated logging is peanuts compared to the plunder that will result from mining by foreigners.

Itogon mountain in Benguet was once a lush forest. No more. No more indigenous peoples, no more timber, no more birds and no more spring water for the rivers. Large-scale miners first tunneled the mountain to get its first-class minerals. Then they bulldozed the mountain to get its second- and third-class minerals. Open-pit mining leaves mercury, lead, acid and other pollutants that make the soil hostile to any living thing. This is what will happen to the Philippines.

Half of the country is mountainous. Five decades of large-scale mining will wipe out all its mountains.

Victor Corpus has been named to head the reforestation program of the government. In the guise of reforestation, he is to drive out the New People's Army and Moro Islamic Liberation Front from the mountains so that the military can assist the foreign miners in removing our mineral treasures without a fight.

There is nothing to reforest once the mountain has been flattened. No life will grow in the poisoned land. We have only to look at the lands used by the US military bases in Clark and Subic. People and children are still dying long after the US soldiers had left. This is yet another blot on the record of the government in dealing with foreign plunderers. That our government has sold us out to them is difficult to deny. We have only to look at the tariff-reductions, tax holidays and other incentives extended to foreign investors. Not to mention the huge foreign debt it has got us into. Now, we are going to pay all of that with our last remaining wealth—our natural resource in the bellies of our mountains.

The promised benefits of large-scale mining (e.g., revenues to pay our national debt) cannot justify the threat and disaster it poses, much less the plunder and militarization of our countryside.

What happens when the gold, copper and wealth have been exhausted? What happens when our mountains have been stripped of their wealth?

Our people fought off foreign and domestic oppression for many years. Our people will fight against the plunder of our mineral resources with their lives. This is a matter of self-defense. The defense of our lives, patrimony and country is the only moral and natural thing to do.

—GREGORIO T. FABROS,
31 Dao St., Mapayapa Village III,
Capitol Hills, Quezon City

Why FPJ lives

IN SYMBOLIC terms, the Filipinos' outpouring of grief over the sudden demise of Fernando Poe Jr. can be interpreted as our people's intense longing for a figurative "hero" who has the power to conquer evil forces in our midst. He is also regarded as "king," a benevolent one who ruled with compassion over his subjects and followers. This is a reality in our society where the majority are impoverished and powerless.

Now that he's gone, our sentiment as a people is that of being orphaned. And we grieve.

The aspect of empowerment, however, will come to us if we, both as individuals and as a people, start realizing that the "hero" archetype is inside each one of us. Everytime we rise up to the challenges that confront us and choose to heed our higher calling—in whatever aspect of our life—we become heroes and masters of our own destiny. Only then will "icons" like FPJ cease to hold power over our consciousness.

—GLECY C. CUENCO,
14 Sarmiento St.,
Better Living Subdivision,
Parañaque City

'Low-level' justification

THE USUAL justification given by many members of Congress for their pork barrel allocation is that "(their) constituents appreciate the projects (they) are bringing home through (their) pork barrel."

This simplistic argument misses the whole point. Of course every little bit of "help" will be appreciated. But the simple fact is, the resources devoted to many of these projects—a good number of which have little long-term benefits for the communities—would be better allocated where the needs are more severe.

The pork-barrel system, along with the IRA, is a very inefficient mechanism for resource allocation in a cash-strapped economy such as ours.

The slip-shod arguments given by our legislators to justify their pork reflect their very low level of discernment. This is the kind of reasoning that I will not accept from my Economics 1 students.

—NICETO S. POBLADOR, PO Box 1361
Baguio City, nickpob@skyinet.net

OFW refused to sue on physical injuries

PLEASE allow us to provide you a progress report on the case of Edna Climaco Macario, the overseas Filipina worker who was the subject of your news item "Pinay pushed out of window." (PDI, 11/28/04)

In his report to Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, Labor Attaché to Kuwait Leopoldo de Jesus said Macario has been transferred to the Al Razi Hospital from Mubarak Hospital for further treatment.

In an interview facilitated by social worker Pilar Francisco, Macario has expressed her desire to return to the Philippines as soon as possible to be reunited with her family. She said that she is willing to file a complaint against her employer so she can collect her unpaid wages dating back to year 2001.

Our Philippine Overseas Labor Office in Kuwait, meanwhile, has summoned Macario's deployment agency in Kuwait for assistance in the filing of a case against her employer for the collection of unpaid salaries. However, Macario refused to file a case against her employer for the injuries she sustained as a result of her fall. Despite this, her case was referred to the ATNU in the Philippine Embassy for the filing of a criminal complaint against her employer.

—JEFFREY D. CORTAZAR,
assistant secretary,
Information and Publication Service,
Department of Labor
and Employment,
6/F DOLE Bldg.,
Intramuros, Manila

One with PDI

IN BEHALF of the members of the Sigma Alpha Sorority of the University of the Philippines, we would like to congratulate the Philippine Daily Inquirer for notching another successful and trailblazing year.

At the same time, please accept our thanks for the support given by the INQUIRER to the recently held 40th anniversary/ruby jubilee of the Sigma Alpha Sorority. Guided by our motto, "Salience in Action," we are one with you in the fight against corruption and any form of violence and indignity against men and women.

—NATALIA MIÑEQUE-MORALES,
president; ROSALINA DE LA PAZ-MAGAT,
vice president, Sigma Alpha Sorority
Alumnae Association, University of the
Philippines, Diliman, QC

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ang buhay parang pelikula, may cmula at vakas rin!

The sudden death of FJP makes me feel that life is ...

FRAGILE! we have 2 make d best of it.
—**geraldine abello**, *iloilo city*

The sudden death of FPJ makes me feel that life is short and that death comes like a thief in the night.
—**nenita r. sarmiento**, *olongapo city*

the sudden death of FPJ makes me feel that life is so short.
—**paul ganaban**, *bacolod*

bey0nd our c0ntr0l, s0 we must live a meaningful life & ready 2 face God at any time & circumstances.
—**dr. jessie albeus**, *naga city*

Life is full of uncertainties. We only live once. Any good deeds we do, We must do it now, for we shall never pass this way again!
—**ZAMIL MAGDAMIT**, *Dasma, Cavite*

...Life is short.
—**Emmanuel Co**, *QC*

Life is great and 2 short 4 those who are kind-hearted. But too long 4 those who are criminals & corrupt people.
—**cynthia a. Valdez**, *la union*

...a choice. We chose d life we have now. So we must face the consequences.
—**Ern Dancel**, *Urdaneta City*

short and unpredictable
—**joseph galang**, *pampanga*

like a passing breeze.
—**marcelo malony mallari**, *caloocan city*

LIFE is full of surprises! Let us enjoy life as if it is our last day on earth.
—**Edwin B. Trinidad**, *DOSCST, Davao*

that life is so short, so lets make d m0st of it.
—**joan lamadrid**, *calamba*

Life is anti-poor... if ur poor, therefore unknown, you leave this world without much attention.
—**Raul G. Sarmiento**, *City of San Fernando*

Made me feel that life is "unpredictable". It can be taken anytime, anywhere, & from anyone!
—**Edwin B. Trinidad**, *DOSCST, davao*

...Life is short.
—**cyhna torre**, *bacolod city*

uncontrollable
—**gerry tan**, *manila*

that life is light & light is life. all that is all that lives, & all that inhales & exhales are affected by the passing of time.
—**elmer Guevara**, *urdaneta city*

sudden death of FPJ makes me feel dat life is so short & unpredictable, but it is meaningful 4 d people who know you better.
—**Joyce Nabre**, *Davao City*

it made me realize that life is full of surprises you won't know 4 how long you'll stay n when you'll go, its so unpredictable...
—**breisa moralde**, *cagayan de oro*

the sudden death of fpj makes me feel that life is, like our 15 seconds of fame, expectedly fleeting.
—**abigail flores**, *pampanga*

Like kingdom...
—**DAN CALPITO**, *pampanga*

life is so short...
—**steve n. pariñas**, *mapandan, pangasinan*

The sudden death of FPJ makes me feet that life is EQUAL. No matter what you are or who you are.
—**hermie ramos**, *quezon city*

The sudden death of FPJ makes me feel that life is an oxymoron, people are so kind to be cruel.
—**MarBenRey Bactol**, *Quezon City*

full of surprises.
—**maria**, *laguna*

life is more than just a game.
—**Josephine Fabricas**, *Q.C.*

The sudden death of FPJ makes me feel that life is truly weak as vapor, not ours 2 boast, but a gift.
—**Antonio Taguinod**, *Antipolo City*

the sudden death of fpj makes me feel that life is unpredictable and a bit uncertain.
—**jethro**, *tacloban*

...life is too short so make the most out of it
—**abigail turingan**, *quezon city*

The sudden death of FPJ makes me feel that life is cruel and unfair coz there are many corrupt politicians out there...
—**Laurence De Peralta**, *Plaridel, Bulacan*

incomprehensible.
—**hazel tabianan**, *caloocan*

the sudden death of FPJ makes me feel that life is too short for me to finish my task on earth.
—**dan ballener**, *iloilo*

Life is fleeting. Make the m0st of it. Always give the best. Enjoy every m0ment of it.
—**dennis estologa**, *bacoor, cavite*

so short.
—**LUCENA MATIAS**, *quezon city*

the sudden death of FPJ makes me feel that life is a gift from God and no one knows when it will end.
—**ernie sentina**, *koronadal city*

Life is not ours and & "Da King"—of heaven—who lent it to us will eventually take it back.
—**Rolly Jude Ortega**, *Koronadal City*

The sudden death of FPJ makes me feel that life is like a movie that has to end. No matter what. No matter who. No matter when.
—**May P. Velayo**, *Quezon City*

Life is 2 be lived 4 d good of fellowmen, and d betterment of country, in ways pleasing 2 d Creator.
—**Raymundo B. Mendoza Jr.**, *Los Baños*

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Tribe prefers farm tools over relief goods

GIFT-GIVING
Happy are those who devote time and effort to helping those in need and it shows in these nuns who help pack basic goods for distribution to victims of Typhoons "Winnie" and "Yoyong" in Quezon and Aurora provinces.
JOAN BONDOC

INFANTA, Quezon—Leaders of a tribe that lost 200 members to floods and landslides are appealing to charity workers not to drown them in relief goods, but give them farm tools and animals instead.

Remedios Marquez, head of the Dumagat group Adhikain ng mga Grupong Taong Katutubong Nagtatanggol sa Lupaing Ninuno (Agta), said the Dumagats are not used to depending on doles and relief goods.

"We fully appreciate the good intentions behind the relief goods . . . but we could not depend on dole outs for long. We are not used to it," Marquez said in an interview at the Tribal Center for Development Building here.

At least 30 Agta families sought shelter in the three-story building being run by the Indigenous Peoples' Apostolate of the Prelature of Infanta.

Marquez said what the tribe needs are farm tools and animals to help them resurrect their devastated land.

"Our tribes are tillers of the soil. Our lives depend on how we nurture the mountain," she said.

Nida Azcaraga, a Dumagat leader from the Samahan ng mga Katutubo na Binabaka ang Suliranin Tungo sa Adhikain (Sakabinsa), a militant group of indigenous people from the Sierra Madre, said they prefer help in regaining their independence.

"Give us farm tools, seeds and animals and we will once more till our agricultural farms in Sierra Madre. They are not big but their produce is enough to sustain a dignified existence," she said.

Azcaraga said they started building houses from the materials that they could gather from the mountain and flood.

"We can not stay forever inside an evacuation center," she said.

Rep. Rafael Nantes (Quezon, 1st District) said farm tools are already part of the assistance package that he had secured from the national government.

"Once the roads and bridges have become passable again, it's not only relief goods that will arrive in northern Quezon but also the much-needed farm assistance," he told the INQUIRER in a mobile phone interview.

"Our priority is to make the road system passable again for the speedy delivery of government assistance," he said.

Ramsey Estuveza, an Agta youth tribal leader, urged the government to also provide alternative livelihood for those involved in the so-called "carabao logging" activities.

He said most of the illegal loggers, some of them Agta natives, were just forced to participate in the illegal trade to survive extreme poverty.

Mayor Hernando Avellanada of General Nakar town said 40 percent of his constituents relied on illegal logging for livelihood.

The municipality, 95 percent of which lies at the center of the Sierra Madre, has an estimated population of 25,000, including at least 3,000 Dumagats.

Estuveza blamed government policies on forest protection as the culprit in the tragedy that killed more than 1,000 people and sent nearly 1,000 others missing.

"We have since spoken and protested . . . the evils of continuous destruction of Sierra Madre by legal and illegal loggers but the government did not listen to us. We hope that this time, they would now listen," he said.

Meanwhile, soldiers that trekked the calamity-stricken areas on foot to bring relief goods after the typhoon were now complaining of worn-out combat boots.

"The soldiers were requesting that they be given new pairs of boots as Christmas gifts . . . Several days of walking in thick mud and water had destroyed their shoes," said Maj. Jose Broso. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Iwahig jail chief sacked for tree-cutting

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Supt. Catalino Malinao of the Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm has been relieved as its warden, according to Palawan provincial information officer Rolando Bonoan Jr.

Bonoan said Malinao's relief was confirmed by some of the prison's employees.

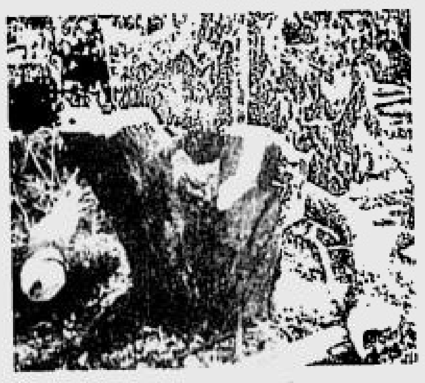
Malinao was scheduled to leave for Manila today.

His relief came after police caught some Iwahig prison inmates while in the act of cutting old-growth acacia trees inside a civil reservation area in Barangay Iwahig on Dec. 14.

The inmates allegedly acted upon the order of some top prison officials.

They had been operating for two days when police caught them.

Mayor Edward Hagedorn said the area is reserved for people who do not have land.



STUMPS of acacia trees that were cut at the Iwahig Penal Colony.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Employees of the penal farm and inmates who have served their sentences are given preference to stay in the land.

Based on Presidential Decree 718, the 916-hectare was declared as a resettlement area.

An inter-agency committee was formed to identify beneficiaries of the land and one of the provisions of the PD was not to alter anything in the area.

Acting on a tip given by a concerned resident, members of the city's anti-squatting unit went to the area and found a group of inmates cutting the trees.

They did not only cut the trees, according to anti-squatting head Rene Gavilaga, but also uprooted them using long bars.

The acacia trees' diameters were equivalent to the length of two arms.

Gavilaga said they had inventoried at least 15,000 board feet of assorted trees, including acacia, but the area that was cleared could be around two hectares. *Jofelle Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Cebu fashion designer shot, wounded in traffic robbery

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Cebu's acclaimed fashion designer became the latest robbery victim in the city.

Three men in a motorcycle robbed and shot Jed Sevilla past midnight on Sunday at an intersection in Barangay Calamba in this city.

Sevilla suffered gunshot wounds in the head, right shoulder, right leg and hip. He was the fourth victim of motorcycle-riding robbers in a week. Local newspapers said 678 robberies were reported in Cebu City as of November.

Supt. Paul Labra, chief of the Cebu City Police Office-Criminal Intelligence and Investigation Bureau, said the robbers did not belong to one group.

He said while the *modus operandi* was the same, there were different suspects based on descriptions given by witnesses.

He said he ordered police precincts to man checkpoints and improve intelligence gathering.

Sevilla, 41, was driving his white Nissan Frontier pick-up with his social secretary Ian Catalan, 18, when he stopped for a red light on V. Rama Avenue and B. Rodriguez Street.

He came from the Basilica del Santo Niño, which he was decorating for the holidays on request of the basilica rector.

While waiting for the green light, a motorcycle stopped beside his vehicle. One of the three men on board knocked on the windshield and shot him in the head, right shoulder and hip.

Catalan, who was at the passenger's seat, got out while Sevilla crawled out of his pick-up.

When the robbers saw Sevilla crawling near a street gutter, one of them again shot him in the right leg.

Irish Castillo, Sevilla's spokesperson, said the designer pretended to be dead.

The robbers then took his P2,500, a 6230 cellular phone and other valuables. They then went back to their motorcycle and fled toward B. Rodriguez Street.

Castillo said that for 10 minutes, nobody came forward to help the bloodied Sevilla. Taxicabs refused to bring him to the hospital. Not even one policeman came to the crime scene.

But Louie Tan, who was driving by, brought Sevilla to the hospital without asking any questions.

Sevilla said he was still conscious and was able to ask for the identity of his rescuer. "He is a good Samaritan," Sevilla said in a phone interview.

Power firm defends plant site

CEBU CITY—Mirant Phils. Corp. said the site of their diesel-fed 5 megawatt power plant in New Washington, Aklan has already been declared an industrial zone by the municipal government.

Greggy Romualdez, public affairs manager of Mirant, said they would address the "legitimate concerns" raised by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in Aklan.

"We would like to give the assurance that we are looking into this matter. We will secure any additional permits and clearances that may be required," he said in a statement e-mailed to the INQUIRER.

Romualdez was reacting to the cease and desist order issued by DAR Aklan on Thursday, directing Mirant to stop the construction of its power plant on a 2.8 hectare orchard farm in Barangay Mabilo, New Washington town.

Daniel Martelino, provincial agrarian reform officer II, who signed the order, told the firm to comply with the order or else the DAR would be compelled to file charges of violating the provisions of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law on the "premature conversion" of agricultural lands into industrial estates.

The DAR maintained that Mirant began building the power plant in June without securing first a certificate of conversion from DAR as required by the law.

The DAR also found questionable the land transfer transaction between former owner Chelma Reyes and the Toledo Holdings, as the property was registered with the Registry of Deeds even without clearance from DAR as mandated by a DAR administrative order.

Romualdez said they had not yet received a copy of the order.

But he said when Mirant acquired the property, the office of the zoning administrator of New Washington made it clear that the property had been classified as industrial zone. *Connie Fernandez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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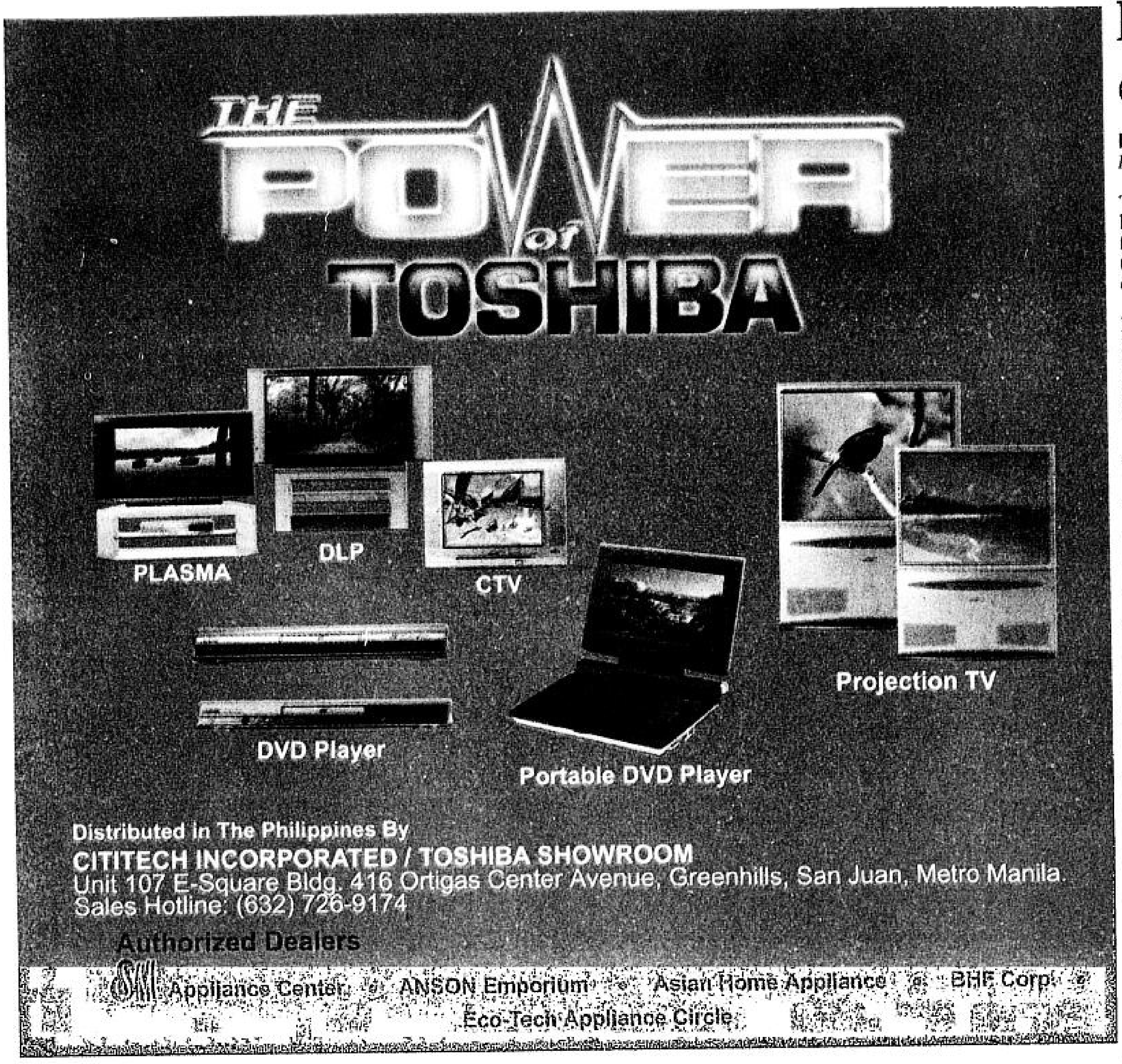
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Fire destroys DA, DILG offices in Tacloban City

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Fire of still unknown origin gutted the regional offices of the Departments of Agriculture and of Interior and Local Government based here early yesterday.

Although no one was reported hurt, the fire destroyed about P130 million worth of property, including modern facilities donated by the Australian government for the DILG emergency centers.

It destroyed four buildings—three belonging to the DA and one to the DILG—all in the same compound along Paterno Extension. These buildings were made of wood and were built about 30 years ago.

Leo Cañeda, DA regional executive director, and William Paler, DILG regional director, said the fire would hinder their operations.

Cañeda said one-third of the agency's workforce, or about 120 personnel, would have to work temporarily at the Soil Laboratory and Quarantine office, an attached agency a kilometer away from the DA regional office.

The rest of the employees would have to hold office at the Eastern Visayas Integrated Research Unit office in Babatngon town, about 40 km west of this city.

"This is really devastating but what is important is we restore the sense of normalcy," said Cañeda.

Paler said he and 70 personnel would move to the DILG provincial office, about 20 meters from the burned regional office.

He said repairs would cost at least P3 million.

SFO2 Nilo Udtuhan, Bureau of Fire regional arson investigator, said the fire broke out at the DA planning and research division at about 1:20 a.m.

Tanong ng Bayan
INQ TV
ABC
Tuwing Huwebes, 10:00pm

I-text ang inyong "fearless view" sa 2910. Pipiliin namin ang pinakamagaling na sagot. Ang premyo linggo-linggo: isang 21" color TV set!
I-type: INQTV <ang inyong sagot>, <buong pangalan>, <siyudad o probinsiya>, tapos ipadala sa 2910. Cut-off time: WEDNESDAY, 6 PM. Winner will be identified during the InqTV program: Thursday, 10:00pm, on ABC.

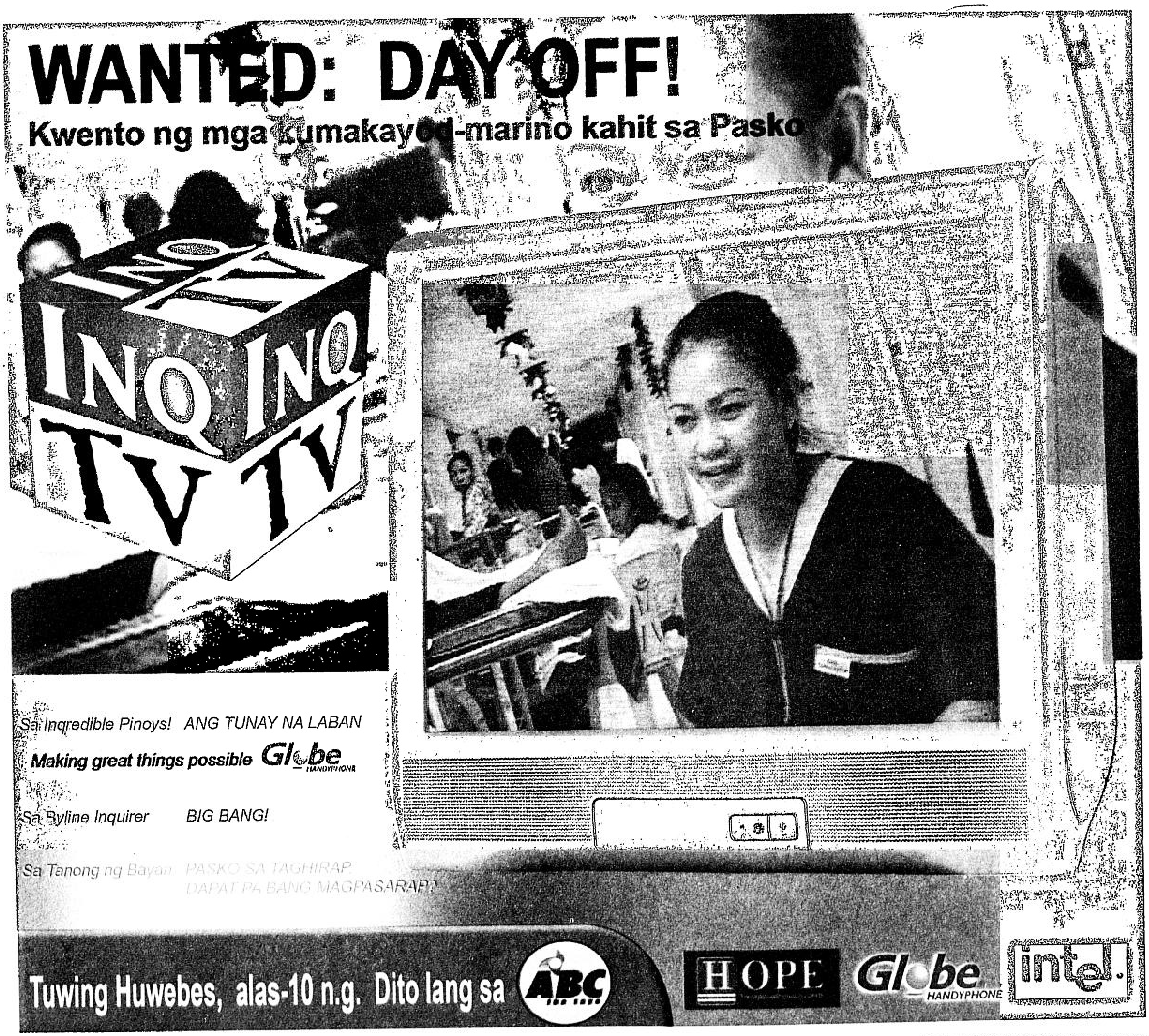
text 2910

Pasko sa taghirap, dapat pa bang magpasarap?

Narito ang ilan sa mga sagot ninyo. Text na!

"oo nman gling n tau s mtinding erap ang gloria d p ntin maabot tnaw tpos d pa tau magppsrap kht papaano"
Ruben Reyes, Bacolod City

"dpat ingi minsan ing nlin gu2nitain ang kaarawan ng ating dakilang messiah!!!"
Restituto O. Corrales, Cabuyao, Laguna


WANTED: DAY OFF!
Kwento ng mga kumakayod-marino kahit sa Pasko

Sa Inqredible Pinoys! ANG TUNAY NA LABAN
Making great things possible Globe HANDYPHONE

Sa Byline Inquirer BIG BANG!

Sa Tanong ng Bayan: PASKO SA TAGHIRAP
DAPAT PA BANG MAGPASARAP?

Tuwing Huwebes, alas-10 n.g. Dito lang sa ABC

HOPE Globe HANDYPHONE intel.

Win this "Inquirer T-shirt!

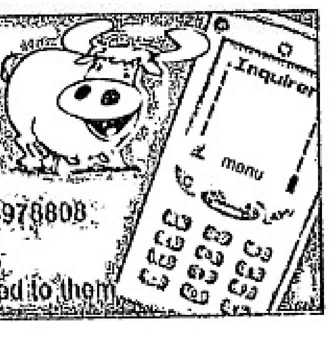
INQBOX

Question of the Week

What are your hopes and dreams for your family this Christmas and the New Year?

Senders of d first 10 texts publishd in Tuesday's INQBOX *wiL each receiv an "Inquirer T-shirt!*

Key in inquirer news name/city/message.
Text your answer to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)
(Maximum of 160 characters)
"Metro Manila winners can call Chay at 8976808 loc. 218. Provincial winners can text inquirer ad name/city/mailing address to 2207 or 283 as their prizes will be mailed to them.

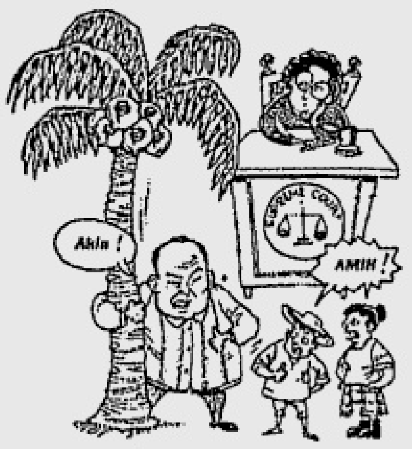


PANAWAGAN SA SANDIGANBAYAN

Desisyunan na ang Coco Levy

Kami, ang mga maliliit na magniniyog, manggagawa sa niyugan, mga samahan at kooperatiba ng mga magniniyog at mga *non-government organizations* na nakikibaka sa pagbawi ng coconut levy, ay mariing nananawagan sa Sandiganbayan na kagyat nang maglabas ng pinal na desisyon sa nakabinbing Civil Case 0033-F:b.

Ang kasong 0033-F:b ay hinggil sa dalawampung porsyentong (20%) bahagi ng San Miguel Corporation (SMC) na nakuha sa pamamagitan ng *coconut levy funds*. Magpahanggang ngayo'y inaangkin ni Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco ang mga SMC *shares of stock* na ito.


Akin !
SUPREME COURT
AMIN !

Malinaw sa desisyon ng Korte Suprema noong ika-14 ng Disyembre 2001 na ang pondong *coconut levy* ay pampublikong pondo. Higit itong pinagtibay noong ika-11 ng Hulyo 2003 nang maglabas ang Sandiganbayan ng desisyon ukol sa tunay na nagmamay-ari ng United Coconut Planters Bank. At nitong ika-7 ng Mayo 2004, malinaw na idineklara ng Sandiganbayan na ang dalawampu't pitong porsyento (27%) bahagi ng SMC (sa kasong 0033-F:a), kasama ang mga CIIF Oil Mills, 14 Holding Companies, at mga kita at dibidendo ng mga kompanyang ito, ay pag-aari *(held 'in trust')* ng Republika ng Pilipinas para sa kapakinabangan ng mga maliliit na magniniyog. Umaasa kami na ang pasya ng Sandiganbayan sa Civil Case 0033-F:b ay magiging katulad din ng mga naunang pasya dito.

Nagagalak kami sa mga naunang desisyon ng mga Korte sapagkat pinapatunayan ng mga ito na hindi tamang angkinin ni Danding Cojuangco ang mga SMC *shares* na nakuha sa pamamagitan ng *coco levy*. Batay sa mga desisyong ito, wala nang dahilan upang mapahaba pa ang deliberasyon hinggil sa mga iba pang ari-ariang nakuha sa pamamagitan ng *coco levy*.

Labingwalong taon nang inaantabayanan ng mga maliliit na magniniyog ang pagpataw ng hustisya. At may kautusan pa nga mula sa Korte Suprema na dapat madaliin ng Sandiganbayan *under pain of contempt* ang pagpapasya sa mga kaso. Pero bakit tumatagal ang paglalabas ng pasya sa mga kaso ukol sa *coco levy*? Kung matatagalan pa ang paglalabas ng pasya ay magpapatuloy lamang ang panlilinlang sa mga maliit na magniniyog kapalit ang pakinabang para sa iilan.

Muli, hinihiling namin ang agarang desisyon ng Sandiganbayan hinggil sa kaso kaugnay ng 20% SMC shares upang makatulong ito sa pagtugon sa matinding kahirapang dinaranas ng mga maliliit na magniniyog sa kanayunan at mapasimulan ang tunay na programang pangkaunlaran para sa industriya ng niyog. Dapat ding aksyunan na ng Korte ang inihapag na *motion for reconsideration* sa kaso ng 27% SMC *shares* at ng UCPB.

Dugo at pawis ng mga maliliit na magniniyog ang mistulang ikinaltas sa ibinenta nilang kopra, at ito'y pinakikinabangan ng iilan magpahanggang ngayon. Nararapat lang na ang hustisya'y kanilang makamtan.

Wigberto E. Tañada, Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) • Oscar "Ka Oca" F. Santos, Coconut Industry Reform Movement (COIR) • Joey T. Faustino, Coconut Industry Reform Movement (COIR) • Vicente Fabe, Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA) • Romeo C. Royandoyan, Philippine Peasant Institute (PPI) • Leonardo Q. Montemayor, Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) • Former Administrator Danilo Coronacion, Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) • Ernesto O. Ordoñez, AgriWatch • **National Organizations** • Makabayang Alyansa ng mga Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (MAKABAYAN-Pilipinas) • Nagkakaisang Ugnayan ng mga Magsasaka at Manggagawa sa Niyugan (NIUGAN) • National Rural Women Congress • Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Samahan sa Kanayunan (PKSK) • Kalayaan Philippine Revival Foundation, Inc. (KALAYAAN) • Center for Agrarian Reform, Empowerment & Transformation (CARET) • Calipayan Research & Development Foundation (CARED Foundation) • **Provincial Organizations** • Kababaihan ng Aurora Lingkod at Kaisa ng Tao (KABALIKAT) • NAMNAMA • Mabato Kalabuso Samahang Magsasaka (MAKASAMA) • UGNAYAN • Katipunan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (KASAMA) • Ugnayan ng Magsasaka sa Quezon (UGMA) • Kapulungan Para sa Ikasusulong ng mga Sandigang Magbubukid sa Mindoro Oriental (KAISA-MO) • Fatima Multi-Purpose Cooperative Inc.• SCFO-Camarines Sur • Matalingkas na Agraryong Grupong Sararo para sa Kauswagan kan Camarines Sur (MAGSAKA-CA) • Fishermen's Unity in the Entire Ragay Gulf Shoreline Association (FUERSA) • BINHI • Developers Foundation, Inc. • Pederasyon ng mga Mamamayang Nagkakaisa sa Aklan (PAMANA) • Tabon Farmers Association • Provincial Cooperative of Small Coconut Farmers of Siquijor (PROCOCO) • Bol-anon League of Coconut Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative • Small Coconut Farmers Organizations (SCFO) - Siquijor • Calape Copra Marketing & MPC • Ubay Small Coconut Farmers Association • Association of Small Coconut Farmer-Jagna • Bohol Integrated Farming Association (BIFA) • Lamintak Farmers Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (LANFABA) • NAMMPRA • League of Small Coconut Farmers-Cebu • San Francisco Small Coconut Farmers Federation of Associations • Sibonga Federation of Farmers Organizations (SIFFO) • Visayas Management and Consultancy (VIMCON) • Alternatives of Citizens and Community Organizations Thru Resource Development Inc. (ACCORD) • Paghiliusa sa Magagmay Nga Manoglubi (PMM) • Pambansang Katipunan ng Makabayang Magsasaka (PKMM) - Negros Occidental • Domolog Tagaytay Multi-Purpose Cooperative (DOTAMCO) • Bais City SCFO Federation San Miguel Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Multi-Purpose Cooperative (SMARBEMPUCO) • Orient Marketing Cooperative (ORMACO) • Ulay Small Farmers MPC (ULASFARMPUCO) • Negros del Norte Agricultural Workers and Community MPC • Negros Oriental Coconut Farmers MPC • Zamboanguita SCFO Federation • Coconut Farmers Multi-Purpose Coop of Southern Leyte (COFASL) • CASAMA Multipurpose Cooperative • Cadarohan Small Coconut Farmers Multipurpose Cooperative • Jabay Small Coconut Farmers Cooperative • Agro Reporma • Association of Concerned Individuals for Development • People's-MEND • Konpederasyon Han mga Organisado Paraglubihan Samar (KOPRAS) • Tandaya Foundation, Inc. • Alyansa ng mga Maglulubi sa Mindanaw (AM-Mindanaw) • Mindanaw Rural Congress (MRC) • Davao Matabog Integrated Enterprises Development Coop (MIEDECO) • Monkayo Kristohanong Pagtinabangay sa Mag-uuma sa Davao (KPMD) • Small Coconut Farmers Organization (SCFO) Federation - Davao City • TODECO • Davao Resources Development Coop • Kalagan MPC (KAMUPCO) • YAMADO • Balay Dabaw del Sur, Inc.• Dabaw del Sur MASIPAG Farmers Ass'n • Agusan Resttlement P.O. Federation (ARPOFED) • PAGTUKUSAN, INC. • Karaga Biodiversity Linkages, Inc. (KARAGA) • HUNGOS • Surigao del Sur Federation of Agricultural Cooperative (SUFAC) • Shalom Multi-Purpose Cooperative • A and M MPC • DABECMUCO • Don Ruben Ecleo Farmers Coop • MAFVEMCO • PPC • San Isidro Farmers Coop • Western Coconut Marketing Coop (WESCROMACO) • Southern Mindanao Federation of Agricultural Coops Inc. (SMFACI) • Association of Coconut Farmers in Zamboanga del Sur (ACOFAZS) • Kaugpungan Gagmay Mag-uuma sa Kagawasan (KGMP) • Moro Farmers Association in Zamboanga del Sur (MOFAZS) • Kalibugan Council of Elders • Phedsalabuhan Guhum Subanen de Sibugay • Zamboanga Sibugay Alliance of Small Coconut Farmers Ass'n • Iranon Coconut Farmers MPC • Kapatagan Women MPC • Samahan ng Aktibong Komunidad ng Igabay (SAKSI) • Panaghiusa Sa Lalawigang Mag-uuma sa Bukinon (PALAMBU) • Bagong Clarin Women's Association • Bag-ong Silang Farmers Association • Baluc Farmers Association (BAFASO) • Barangay Trigos Farmers Association (BTFA) • Bernard Farmers Association (BFA) • Buenavista MPC (BUEMPCO) • Bunga Sustainable Development Organization (BSDO) • Burgos Lopez Jaena Farmers Association • Carmen Farmers Ass'n (CaFA) • Don Andres Soriano Farmers Ass'n • Gandawan Planters Farmers Ass'n • Guingona Farmers Ass'n • Hoyohoy For Ecological Restoration (HERO) • Kanao-Kanao Small Farmers Ass'n • Kapunungan sa mga Mag-uuma sa Sinampungan (KAMAS) • Kimat Biodiversity Farmers Ass'n (KIBFA) • Lalud Bigay Buhay MPC • Lampasan Farmers Ass'n • Mamalad MPC • Mansawan Planters Ass'n • Mapurog Small Farmers MPC (MaSFaMCO) • Matugas Alto CARPBA • Matugnao Farmers Ass'n • Mialen Sustainable Development Organization • Montol Indigenous Farmers Ass'n (MIFA) • Owayan Farmers Ass'n • Paiton MPC • Peniel Farmers Ass'n • Petianan Farmers Ass'n • Salimpuno Ass'n of Farmers for Environment (SAFE) • San Antonio Farmers Ass'n • SEA Kanluran Ass'n • Sebasi Farmers Ass'n • Siloy Farmers Cooperative • Singalat Agrarian Reform Beneficiary Ass'n • Stimson Abordo MPC (SAMPCO) • Toliyok Farmers Ass'n • Tuno Rural Improvement Club • Misamis Occidental Maglulubi MPC (MOMCO) • Larangan Coco Farmers Ass'n (LACOFA) • Misom Coconut Farmers Ass'n • Mamalo Descendants Organization • MIRAD • Royal Iranon MPC • Teduray and Lambangian Womens Organization (TLWO) • Teduray and Lambangian Youth & Students Organization (TLYSA) • Youth and Student Iranon Society

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Royal burial rites for FPJ

From page A1

be shown. The casket of Fernando Poe Jr. will be carried by a caisson drawn by two horses," he said.

"Ms Susan Roces and Mary Grace shall follow (in) a *kalesa*," he added.

Asked if the funeral march would be grandiose, Poe's younger brother said it would befit a man like FPJ.

"No, it is not going to be that grandiose. It is what we think really fits him: Simple, solemn and full of heart," Conrad said.

Some 30 minutes before the march, Poe's coffin will be moved out of the Sto. Domingo Church.

Closed to viewing

Conrad said that because of a wedding scheduled for 9 a.m., the church management had asked the Poe family to vacate the area around 5 a.m.

Viewing of Poe's remains shall be closed to the public at 8 p.m. today. This is to give family and friends some time to be alone with the late actor, Conrad said, asking for understanding.

Tonight, Poe's maroon casket will be moved from the St. Martin's Chapel of the church to the Sto. Domingo main altar. At 9 p.m., a necrological service will be held, organized by Poe's close friends in the movie industry.

Deposed President Joseph Estrada, who has been given a 24-hour pass by the Sandiganbayan so he can be at his friend's wake, will deliver a eulogy, according to the plan drawn up by organizers.

Family tradition

The plan is to bury Da King before noon, as dictated by a family tradition.

Conrad urged those who would come to the funeral march to wear a blue arm band or a blue ribbon.

"Those who cannot join the march but still wish to show their sympathy, we ask them to light candles and wear or display blue arm bands, ribbons or banners on that day," he said.

During the march, Conrad said members of the United Opposition plan to wear black arm bands saying, "Ako'y Pilipino."

Ping won't be there

Volunteer groups which worked during Poe's campaign will also be around. Members of other political parties have signified their intention to join the march as well, according to Conrad.

"These reflect on FPJ's achievement in unifying the Filipino people toward meaningful reform," he said.

But one opposition senator will not be there. Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, a rival of Poe in the May presidential election, flew to the United States last night and is likely to spend Christmas there.

This is the order of the march:

- Traffic marshals shall be posted up front, followed by Poe's mural, and a media truck.
- They shall be followed by Poe's hearse.
- Susan Roces and Mary Grace shall come next on board a carriage. They shall be followed by a back-up vehicle.
- Next to Roces and her daughter shall be Poe's relatives, followed by the Batang Pasig (the organization of people who had worked with Poe in his films), people from the movie industry, UNO members, volunteer groups, and finally, the mass organizations allied with Poe.

Pall bearers

Two sets of eight pall bearers will carry FPJ's bier to the flower-decked, horse-drawn hearse, the first set composed of friends from outside the movie industry and the second of friends from his "show biz family."

Even as Poe's widow called for a solemn, politics-free burial for the actor, around 100,000 members of Christian groups in the country will gather for the burial march tomorrow.

The Jesus is Lord Church Worldwide—whose founder Bro. Eddie Villanueva ran for president in the last elections—the Philippines for Jesus Movement and the Bangon Pilipinas National Renewal Movement plan to mobilize their supporters to join the march.

The 100,000 JIL, PJM and Bangon supporters will be wearing yellow shirts, without any political label, and black arm bands.

Villanueva said the mobilization would not be political but evangelical in nature.

He said the Christian groups had dubbed their participation in the burial march as "Operation Salvation," an opportunity to share the love of Christ with Poe's family and followers.

"The thrust of the march is to share the gospel of salvation of Christ, inspiring the people not only to pray for the family of FPJ but to continue in the footsteps of FPJ by helping the poor and fighting injustice," Villanueva said in a phone interview yesterday.

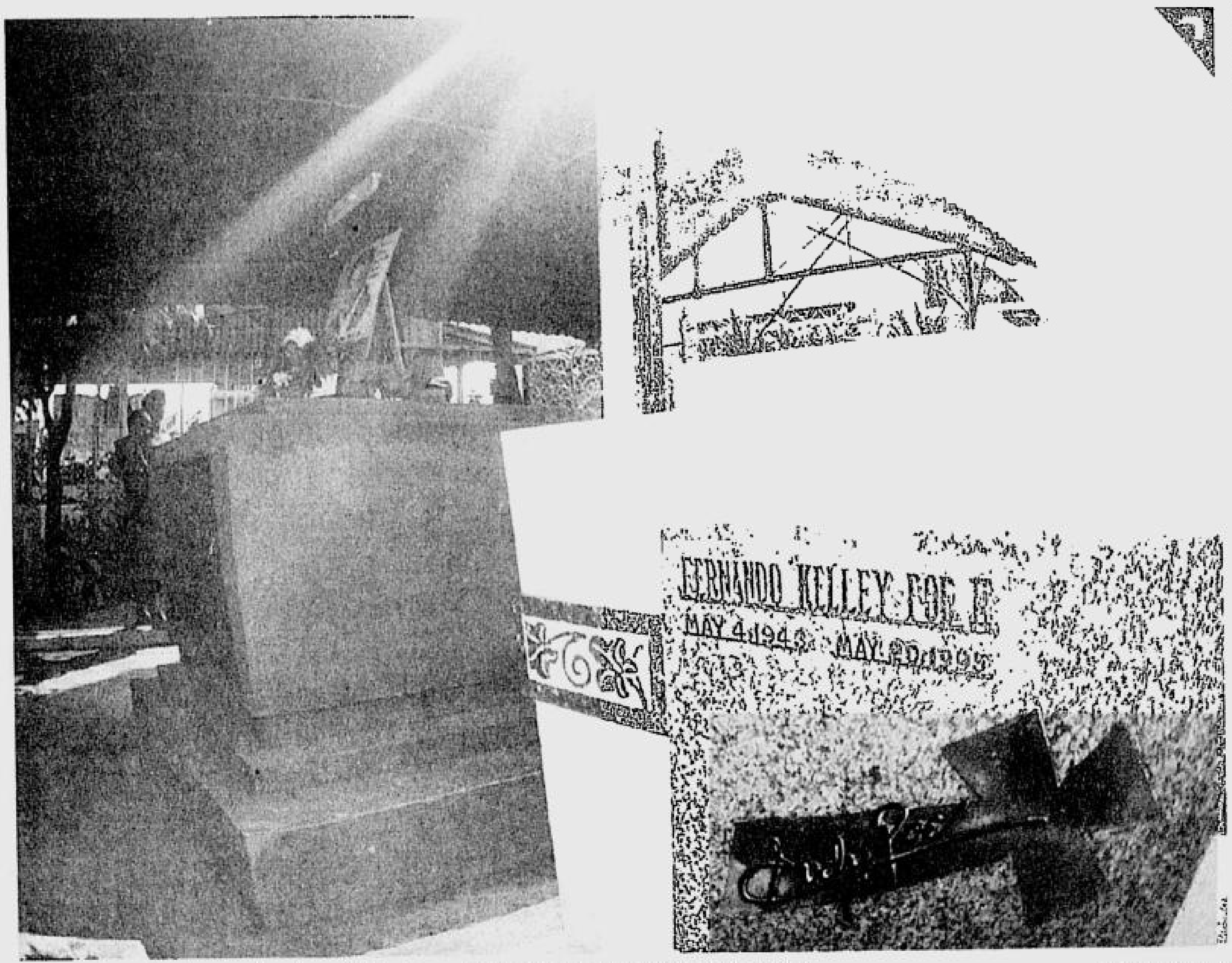
Intentions clean

"It's irrelevant to us if they see it as political or not. We don't please the eyes of men," he added.

Villanueva said he did not care what people would think of his Christian supporters' presence in Poe's burial because their intentions were clean.

"This is to show our support for the family of FPJ and the multitudes of followers who have shared our common aspirations for the liberation of our nation from the bondages of poverty, injustice, violence and corruption," he said.

"It's a religious gathering," Bangon deputy director general Dong Cucio said. "It will be peaceful and solemn, we will just let the emotions of the people run." *With reports from Edson Tandoc, Blanche Rivera and Fe Zamora*



THIS tomb awaits the remains of movie king Fernando Poe Jr. at the Manila North Cemetery.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Chavit slams GMA on Erap travel to HK

From page A1

Estrada is set to leave on Dec. 23, but the Sandiganbayan has yet to approve the date.

Singson said Estrada's plan to undergo a knee replacement operation was just for show. "Finish the case first. If Estrada is innocent, free him; if guilty, pardon him. But we should not let him escape," he said.

Presidential Chief of Staff Norberto Gonzales denied Singson's accusation.

"I don't know his basis for making hasty decisions because if he thinks we are making a deal with President Erap (by letting him) go to Hong Kong, I don't think that is true," Gonzales said.

"The decision whether or not to allow him to go to Hong Kong was made by the court and what I did was only to arrange (the requirements) and make sure that the wishes of the court are followed," Gonzales told reporters.

Gonzales-Estrada meet

Gonzales said he spoke to Estrada to personally arrange the "technical requirements" of the former President's trip to Hong Kong. But he said Malacañang had nothing to do with the decision allowing Estrada to leave the country for medical reasons.

Environment Secretary Michael Defensor, who had been Ms Arroyo's personal emissary to Estrada, said he would help "clarify the issues" by talking to Singson.

"I'm sure this is just a misunderstanding. I think these issues can be clarified," Defensor said.

Singson voiced suspicions that Malacañang was behind efforts to "facilitate" Estrada's escape to Hong Kong or China, which has no extradition treaty with the Philippines.

"We've been supporting President Macapagal-Arroyo. We endured graft and corruption in government. We defend her from all the attacks, but there's a limit to everything. It's too much when they facilitate the trip of the former President," he said.

"We are returning to the old ways," he said, referring to the practices of the Estrada administration.

The practice then of "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" is back, according to Singson.

SINGSON: We are returning to the old ways.

JOAN BONDOC

Draw the line

In a statement, private prosecutors said they believed that Estrada would not return and would just use the trip to "undermine the judicial process."

"There can never be a strong republic where there is compromise without principles, or peace without justice. As a people, where do we really stand?" they said, warning that Edsa II was about "drawing the line against graft and corruption."

"To draw the line, the people had twice taken to the streets. Are they being challenged to do it again?" said private prosecutors Arno and Pablito Sanidad, Ricardo Nepomuceno Jr., Anthony Peralta, Leonard S. de Vera and Marichu Lambino.

Arno V. Sanidad said the Office of the Ombudsman was set to ask the Supreme Court yesterday afternoon to issue a temporary restraining order stopping Estrada from leaving.

Singson interjected, saying that like in the days before Edsa II, they took the Estrada impeachment issue to the high tribunal, but when they failed to get justice there, they brought the issue directly to the people.

Change ways

Asked whether he was ready to expose graft in the administration, Singson said he might do it in his next meeting with the press.

"We are still supporting the President if she changes her ways now. If not, I will follow what the people says," Singson said. "I hope the President will think twice."

Although he is for "reconciliation," it does not mean that the administration must give in to all the demands of Estrada, according to Singson. He said it must also enforce the laws.

"Madame President, you cannot please everybody. You must enforce the law to show that we have a strong republic. We cannot give in to everybody," he said, adding that the Estrada case is a "showcase" for the government's fight against graft.

Should he break away from the administration, it would be 'different from the "personal" fight for his life when Estrada reportedly ordered him killed.

"But this one, I will break ties with President Arroyo because of the Filipino people. We are now fooling the Filipino people," he said.

Not accurate

Gonzales said it was "not totally accurate" that Malacañang facilitated Estrada's trip to Hong Kong.

He noted that Estrada petitioned the court to be allowed to undergo knee surgery abroad.

"Now, his going to Hong Kong does not mean he can just board a plane and go to the hospital. The Sandiganbayan has requirements for his trip—how he will leave, how many policemen will join him, how long will he stay there—things like that. I happened to be the one instructed to attend to the technical requirements of President Erap's trip to Hong Kong," he said.

Gonzales said his job required paying a personal visit to Estrada. "I did not talk to the Erap camp to negotiate. I personally called (him) to know the technical requirements of his trip."

The Palace official refused to say who instructed him to make the arrangements. "It's my job, I do things like this. I don't have to be ordered to do this," he said.

He said he could not do anything about Singson if he decided to abandon Ms Arroyo. "I just hope that if he wants to make a decision like that, he should not use me as an excuse."

Insult

He told Singson not to "insult" the Sandiganbayan by saying it was conniving with Malacañang to get Estrada off the hook.

Gonzales said Singson's charges of widespread corruption were not true.

"We cannot deny the problem of graft and corruption. This has been the biggest problem of all administrations. But what I can say is this administration of the President is the most serious in fighting graft and corruption," he said.

Gonzales said Ms Arroyo herself had been complaining about rampant corruption in the bureaucracy.

A former national security adviser, Gonzales warned against fomenting unrest.

He said Singson had the right to "go to the people" to talk about what he believed to be problems in the Arroyo administration.

"Going to the people is a right of everyone as long as they will avoid chaos. If anybody foments violence and violates the law, that is a different matter," Gonzales said.

FPJ relatives, supporters welcome Chavit

By Armand N. Nocum

ILOCOS Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, who is threatening to withdraw support from President Macapagal-Arroyo, was welcomed by relatives and supporters of Fernando Poe Jr. when he attended the actor's wake before dawn on Friday.

But Singson was quick to deny yesterday that he was set to join the pro-Poe groups that are reportedly hatching plans to destabilize the administration.

He said he visited Poe's wake because he was acquainted with the actor for about 40 years.

Asked why he was not lynched by groups angry at the administration for allegedly cheating Poe in the May presidential election, Singson said: "They know I have no quarrel with Ronnie (Poe)."

He said the people lining up to view Poe's body at the Sto. Domingo Church were extending their hands to shake his and were shouting "Idol! Idol!"

During his 1:30 a.m. visit, the governor said he was met by Conrad Poe and other close relatives of the late actor. He said Poe's wife Susan Roces had left by then.

"They were all happy to see me attending the wake," he said.

He said he became close to Poe because the latter would stay with him when Poe made movies in Ilocos Sur.

Although he had renovated his house, he said he never touched the room occupied by Poe and had told the actor that it was still there for his use.

"*Kahit anong mangyari, kaibigan pa rin kami* (We were still friends no matter what happened)," he said.

When Poe was brought to the hospital after suffering a stroke, Singson said he called up Roces to ask what he could do to help and Poe's wife thanked him for it.

When the actor announced he was running for President, the governor said he called him up to say that it was too bad that he made the announcement when Singson had already pledged to support Ms Arroyo.

Still, Singson said some of his relatives openly supported Poe's candidacy.

Grieving FPJ fans pour hearts out in writings on boards

From page A1

shifted to this," he said.

Liwanag said the sheets—filled with heart-warming messages which ran to a few hundred—would be turned over to Poe's family after the wake.

Short and sweet

Most messages were short and sweet: "FPJ, we love you and we will terribly miss you."

Or long and illustrious: "FPJ, we will not forget you. Even if you have already departed, you will remain in our hearts."

Or filled with drama: "They may have stolen your seat, but they can never take your crown. You carry it with you to the grave."

Some fans wrote slowly, as if they were weighing their words. Others couldn't help but weep, albeit silently, as they wrote their condolences to Susan Roces. Others just came to read, nodding their heads and wiping a tear.

There were messages from people who came from as far away as Catbalogan, Samar, and Bacolod City in Negros Occidental.

"FPJ, the residents of Cabanatuan City love you very much," wrote Nora Tolentino.

"We admire your principles, kindness and generosity, your sense of honor, your commitment to what you value most," wrote a certain Herminia.

"FPJ, *kahit wala ka na, para sa akin, walang hihigit pa sa hinahangaan kong tao. Ikaw lang ang nag-iisa para sa akin* (Although you are gone, you are the person I most admire. You're the only one)," recorded Lolit Ramada.

Other messages read like a diary entry: "*Simula noong nagkaisip ako, ikaw na ang* idol *ko* (Since I was young, you have been my idol.) I cried when I learned that you died. I know you personally. Since then, I have watched all your movies. You're my idol. You are always in my family's heart. You are 'Our President.' We love you."

Or a confession: "We're happy to see you for the first time in our lives. Unfortunately, it is in a situation like this. We know you are happy in the house of the Lord. You'll always be in our hearts."

Mostly, they were declarations of love: "We love you, FPJ, very much. You are God's precious blessing to the Filipino people. We admire your principles and values, your sense of honor, your commitment to what you value most. This world is diminished, greatly diminished by your absence. You are our hero, the elected president of 2004-2010."

METRO
E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
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PDEA eyes insider aid in suspect's escape

By Nelson F. Flores

UNDERSECRETARY and Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency Director General Anselmo Avenido Jr. yesterday ordered an investigation into the escape of a Chinese suspect linked to the operation of an illegal drugs laboratory, adding that it was likely that it was done with the help of someone from the agency.

Last year, the PDEA "mysteriously" lost another suspect in a similar raid.

Avenido also ordered the confinement of PO1 Frederick Placido, the lone guard watching the cell of Li Zhong Hong, after he found his report on the incident incredible. Li, alias James Mian, linked to a big time drug ring, escaped from his cell at the PDEA Metro Manila Regional Office in Quezon City by destroying the grill cover of the exhaust fan in his windowless cell. He was reported missing at 5:45 a.m. last Saturday by another jail guard.

Apart from Placido, Avenido also placed under technical arrest Chief Insp. Dante Gacadan, officer in charge of the PDEA custodial group, and PO2 Rolando Duazo, the other guard who was supposed to be on duty. He also ordered the interrogation of the remaining inmates at the agency's other detention cells.

An ocular inspection of Li's detention cell conducted by Avenido showed that the horizontal steel bar covering a small exhaust fan had been sawed off.

But assuming that Li fit his 5-foot-6 frame in the small opening, the route would have been "hazardous," Avenido said in a statement. "If the escapee used this, he could have been seriously injured because he would be jumping a height equivalent to three stories."

The theory that Li escaped with the help of agency personnel was further boosted when a night shift guard at the parking area noticed a "slender male person" who appeared to be "waiting for somebody" while standing near a car parked in front of the PDEA headquarters at about 3 a.m.

"He did not bother to check or confront the person because he thought he was part of the PDEA personnel," Avenido said. "But it is possible that the person could be the detainee, who might have slipped through the door while the guard was asleep."

Li was arrested last month during the raid of an alleged drug laboratory in Multinational Village, Parañaque City.

The house yielded a huge volume of chemicals used in manufacturing high-grade shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride). Some of the ingredients were subsequently destroyed by a fire that mysteriously gutted the storehouse where they had been placed for safekeeping.

Cebu Rep. Antonio Cuenco, on the other hand, sought the relief of police officers whose negligence resulted in the escape, as he pushed for a 20-year jail term for those who would bungle drug cases.

A former chair of the House committee on dangerous drugs, Cuenco said Zhong's escape justified the need for a strict enforcement of Republic Act 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, which penalizes those who botch drug cases like negligent law enforcers.

Eastern Samar Rep. Marcelino Libanan, for his part, said the escape of drug traffickers diminished the gains made by the government in its all-out war against illegal drugs, even as he called for the prosecution of those who had worked for the freedom of drug traffickers.

"Relieving those negligent is not enough. They should be imprisoned. They are a disgrace to the police institution," he added.

With Cynthia D.Balana

LTO needs your ITRs for vehicle registration

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE LAND Transportation Office may soon require the submission of income tax returns before approving car registration papers to help the Bureau of Internal Revenue improve its tax collection efforts.

A lawmaker has called the government's attention on the wide disparity between the LTO's data on car registration and the BIR's count of individual taxpayers.

LTO chief Anneli Lontoc said her agency was willing to cooperate with the BIR, provided there would be a linkup first between the computer systems of the two government institutions.

"There should be a way for us to verify whether the ITRs being submitted are genuine. Otherwise, the cooperation would be useless if the car owner would give us a fake tax return," said Lontoc.

She said initial discussions between the technical people of the BIR and the LTO had taken place as to how they could connect the computer system of the two agencies.

Lontoc said further discussions had to be made to formalize the cooperation.

"We support anything that will raise revenues for the government. The LTO is also trying to come up with ways to enhance its collection," she added.

Negros Oriental Rep. Herminio Teves had been advocating the submission of tax returns to the LTO prior to vehicle registration. This would allow the BIR to collect an additional P88 billion in taxes yearly, he added.

More than 2.3 million vehicles may have been bought in the country, the taxes of which were not automatically withheld, Teves said.

JOSEPH AGCAOILI

CHRISTMAS (NOT) FOR EVERYONE
A mother and her brood find shelter—and a temporary home—on pieces of cardboard and a solitary bench along busy Roxas Boulevard, a favorite hub of people living in more comfortable circumstances. Many of the urban poor, like this family, may find Christmas passing them by like the thousands of cars that stream through the famous thoroughfare daily.

SWAT man killed in brawl; 2 suspects held

TWO SUSPECTS were arrested yesterday by Taguig police barely 24 hours after the killing of a member of Makati City's Special Weapon and Tactics unit.

Rey Gomez and Mariano de La Cruz were arrested by police after they were positively identified by witnesses as among the five suspects who allegedly mauled to death PO1 Dionie Javier, a member of the SWAT team in Makati.

According to PO2 Eddie Tirazona, the police officer was walking along 8th Street, GHQ Village Zone 1 Signal Village last Sunday at around 9 p.m. when he came upon the five suspects who were engaged in a drinking session.

According to witnesses, the suspects and the victim had a brief argument that ended in the mauling of the police officer.

They added that Javier suddenly pointed his firearm at the suspects and asked them why they were looking at him in "a strange way."

Angered, the suspects reportedly pulled the gun from Javier, and began to attack the now defenseless policeman.

The five allegedly took turns in kicking, punching and hitting Javier with a blunt object that could have caused his death.

Makati Police inspector Marlon Almoguerra said the suspects had used huge blocks of wood and a rock to hit Javier on the head.

The victim was brought to Taguig-Pateros District hospital, but he did not make it alive.

"The suspects refused to say why they attacked the victim," Tirazona said, adding that the two remained silent when asked why they beat up the victim.

Police said several witnesses saw the incident, including an Army sergeant who tried to stop the suspects from dealing blows on the victim who was already sprawled on the ground.

Javier's service firearm was reportedly recovered by the sergeant from one of the suspects who was holding the handgun before they fled the scene of the crime, witnesses said.

The other suspects are Richat Ecleo, a certain "Don Don," and Jonathan Enario.

De la Cruz and Ecleo are construction workers and residents of Taguig.

Don Don, whose complete name and address were not immediately available, was allegedly working for a janitorial services firm.

Enario is a resident of Kalayaan Avenue, Makati City.

Nancy C. Carvajal and Carlo Maru C. Mariano, trainee

Charges readied vs scions

By Nancy C. Carvajal

CHARGES of attempted murder and malicious mischief will be filed against two grandsons of Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte and a son of former basketball superstar Ramon Fernandez for allegedly firing repeatedly at a house in a posh Alabang village on Dec. 14.

"The sworn statements of three village guards and two responding policemen supported the filing of the case against the suspects," said Southern Police District chief Senior Supt. Wilfrido Garcia.

Jose Torrendon, Miko Flores and Jeremias Servidad of the Ayala Alabang Village Security Group submitted their affidavits on the shooting incident, along with PO2 Juanito Balahaia and PO1 Ferdinand Alvarez.

Luisa Rojas Duce also filed a separate affidavit pointing to the two grandsons of Villafuerte and a minor son of Fernandez as the alleged suspects in the strafing of her house on Agno St., Ayala Alabang Village.

Asked for comment, Marissa Fernandez, wife of the former cage star said her son was "wrongly implicated," in the incident.

She refused to elaborate and instead referred the INQUIRER to the family's lawyer, Howard Calleja.

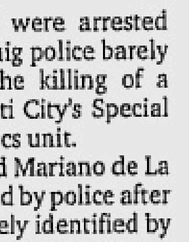
"My client does not have any knowledge or participation in the shooting incident," Calleja said.

But he refused to comment when asked if his client was one of the passengers in a white Lexus allegedly involved in the shooting incident.

INQUIRER tried to reach Villafuerte by phone to get the family's side several times, but no one took the calls.

An uncaring home for the aged

ON TARGET



Ramon Tulfo

LAST Saturday, I found that not all people who volunteer to serve their unfortunate fellowmen necessarily have hearts of gold.

I went with a group of flight stewards and stewardesses who call themselves Streetpals and a kind-hearted lady named Lina Poblete to a place called Tahanan ni Maria, a home for the aged and street children, in Carmona, Cavite, to distribute gifts. Members of Streetpals take care of street children when they're not serving PAL passengers in flight.

"Tahanan," located in an inland barrio far from the highway, is run by a priest, Fr. Bitoy Makalintal. Its governess is Betty de Leon, a cranky old lady.

De Leon wanted her and her volunteer staff to distribute the food and Christmas presents to the Tahanan wards—61 old men and women and 20 former street children. But we were able to convince her—after an exchange of words—that we traveled all the way from Metro Manila to personally hand over the food and Christmas presents to their wards. De Leon consented but showed her displeasure by making herself scarce during the party.

There was an excess of food because Cory Grey, Streetpals' mother hen, foresaw there would be more people to feed aside from the Tahanan wards, officials and volunteer employees. She was right, because at the time we visited the place, 40 student caregivers from different schools were there. They were doing on-the-job training as part of their curriculum.

As we were about to distribute food to the student caregivers, Ms De Leon came into the picture. She insisted that we turn over the food to her. As in the situation earlier, we said that we be allowed to give the food away.

But De Leon insisted that we turn the food over to the kitchen where, she said, the student caregivers would eat.

But since all the wards and employees had already been fed, we thought it would be best for the student caregivers to join us for lunch. It was already 1:30 p.m. and we could see that the students were already hungry.

After taking our lunch, we asked if the food we brought could already be served to the students. Ms De Leon was adamant, so we asked to see Father Makalintal at his office.

The priest was smoking like a chimney when we got to his office. Taking a good look at him, I noticed that he dyed his hair, as well as his moustache and beard. Probably in his late 50s or early 60s. *Mukhang playboy.*

While Cory, Lina and Tony Calvento, my director for Isumbong mo kay Tulfo TV program, were talking with the priest, he kept blowing his smoke in our direction. I was tempted to ask the good priest whether he thought we were fighting cocks.

We told him our beef. He backed Ms De Leon: the students couldn't have their lunch because they were there as part of their study. But, Father, we said, the food was on us.

But the priest wouldn't listen to us, so we ended the conversation.

I was tempted to tell Father Makalintal that if he was stingy with food for the students—and the food was ours anyway—he could be greedy with his own wards.

Earlier on, as we were having the Christmas party, I saw an old woman who was in extreme pain and couldn't join the merrymaking. Blood was coming out of her private part. No employee of Tahanan showed concern over the old woman's plight. The students were trying to ease her pain by giving her soothing words.

Streetpals took pity on her and called an ambulance that took the writhing woman to the Makati Medical Center.

I advise Tahanan donors to take a second look at how their money and goods are being spent. I urge the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to investigate officials of the Tahanan ni Maria.

Some people might be using the old people's home for their own selfish ends.

Avoid Maysilo today

HALF of Maysilo Circle in Mandaluyong City will be closed to traffic today from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. in anticipation of the huge crowd that will gather for the annual Pamaskong Handog where about 36,000 Noche Buena packages will be distributed to Mandaluyong constituents as part of the city government's Yuletide activities.

Maysilo, from the corner of Jollibee to the entrance of Martinez, will be closed to vehicular traffic for the whole day.

Motorists coming from Edsa-Boni going to Gabby's must take a right turn from Boni Avenue to Sikap Street, left on Sto. Rosario to Boni Avenue again. Makati-bound vehicles may take Barangka Drive, if coming from Shaw or Edsa-Pioneer, or P. Cruz and Blumentritt from Boni-Kalentong.

Gabby's-Kalentong to Edsa routes will not be affected by the rerouting, but, motorists are advised to avoid passing through the Maysilo Circle area today to avoid the heavy traffic.

P. Santillan; 82

EDUCATOR Primitiva V. Santillan, mother of journalist Jennifer Santillan-Santiago, died yesterday evening at the Manila Sanitarium. She was 82 years old.

Santillan, a teacher at P. Burgos Elementary School, later co-founded the Sesame Pre-School. She is survived by her children Rowena, Christian, Percival, Hannibal, Jennifer, Samuel, Charlemagne and Elijah; children-in-law Florencio, Evelyn, Divina, Manolet, Lalaine, Susan and Gefel; grandchildren, brothers and sisters. Her body lies at the Rizal Funeral Homes, Cementina St., Pasay City. Interment will be on Dec. 22 at the South Cemetery in Makati City.

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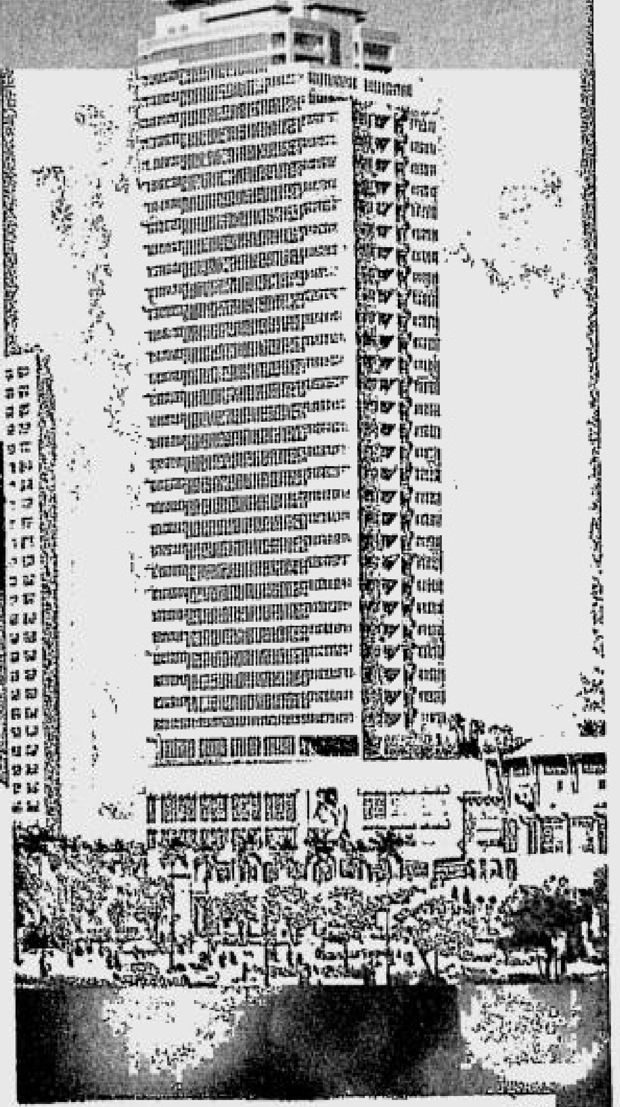

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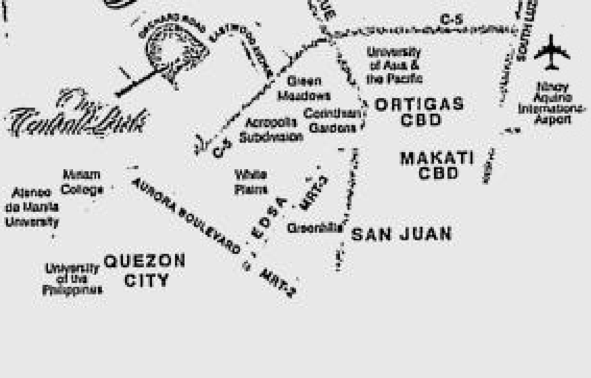
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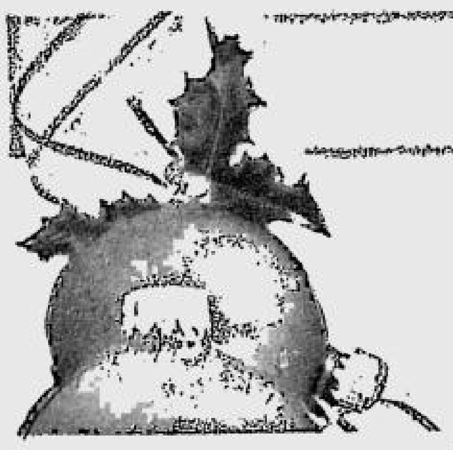

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Ginebra Kings seek piece of lead against Beermen

By June Navarro

BARANGAY Ginebra has an ax to grind after getting clobbered by San Miguel Beer in their first meeting.

The Gin Kings are expected to use this grudge as motivation when they meet the Beermen again in the Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup today at the Ilocos Norte Centennial Arena in Laoag City.

Barangay Ginebra is gunning for win No. 12 and a playoff for one of two outright semifinal berths.

"We've been lucky enough to get this far but we cannot forget how we lost to San Miguel in the first round," said Ginebra coach Siot Tanquincen. "We will use that as motivation."

The Beermen subdued the Gin Kings, 83-72, on Oct. 13, when Tanquingcen and his wards were still groping for the right chemistry.

Now, coach Jong Uichico and the Beermen face a squad that is playing solid basketball and boasts a deadly player at every position.

Romel Adducul and Eric Menk have been consistently averaging double-double figures in points and rebounds while Jayjay Helterbrand and Mark Caguioa have become one of the most reliable backcourt combinations.

Then there's Rodney Santos, Sunday Salvacion, Migs Noble and Andy Seigle who all have proved their worth coming off the bench.

Through their efforts, the Gin Kings (11-5) have won four of their last five games. A victory today gives them a share of the lead with the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals (12-5) and a guaranteed playoff for the No. 2 slot.

Shell wrapped up its elimination round campaign with a 12-6 record. The Turbochargers are hoping for a Ginebra loss to boost their chance for one of the top two positions that will be rewarded with outright semifinal slots at the end of the eliminations.

The top two finishers after the elimination round will advance to the semifinals and leave the rest of the teams canceling each other out in the wildcard phase and quarterfinal round.

San Miguel Beer holds an 8-8 record and bids to claim the No. 4 spot, which is also being sought by Alaska and Purefoods, both at 8-9.

With Sta. Lucia Realty losing to Talk 'N Text the other night, the Beermen, Aces and TJ Hotdogs avoided finishing either ninth and 10th.

Under the format, the last two teams need to hurdle the No. 3 and 4 squads in the wild-card round to get into the quarterfinals while their rivals need just a win to advance.

STANDINGS	W	L
Talk N Text	12	5
Shell	12	6
Brgy Ginebra	11	5
San Miguel	8	8
Alaska	8	9
Purefoods	8	9
Coca-Cola	7	10
FedEx	6	10
Red Bull	6	10
Sta. Lucia	5	11

GAME TODAY
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6 p.m.—Barangay Ginebra vs San Miguel Beer

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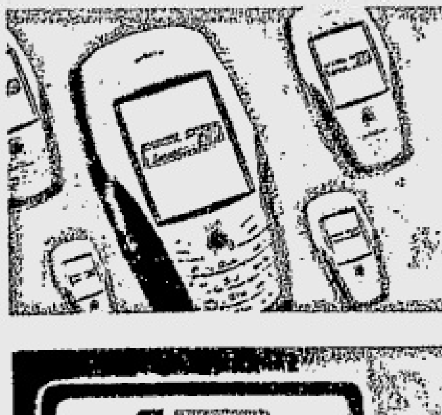

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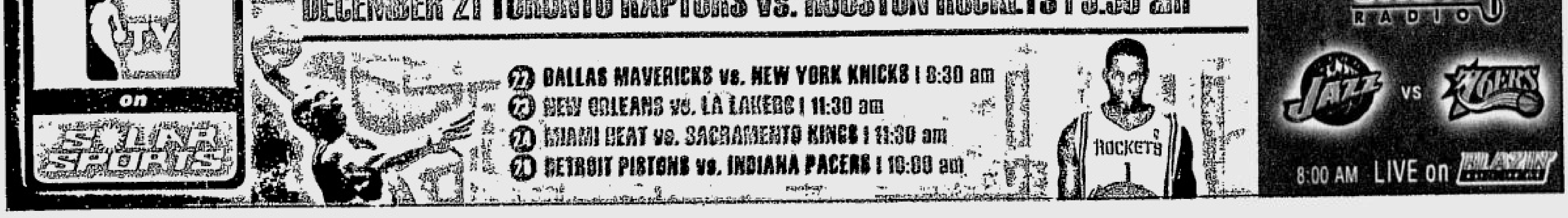

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22 DALLAS MAVERICKS vs. NEW YORK KNICKS | 8:30 am
23 NEW ORLEANS vs. LA LAKERS | 11:30 am
24 MIAMI HEAT vs. SACRAMENTO KINGS | 11:30 am
24 DETROIT PISTONS vs. INDIANA PACERS | 10:00 am

8:00 AM LIVE on

ATIENZA calls for sobriety.

Young Atienza also seeking Eric's old PSC job

By Marc Anthony Reyes

ALI Atienza, the youngest in the short list of aspirants for the chairmanship of the Philippine Sports Commission, is appealing for a moratorium on speculations as to who would be the next government sports czar.

"It is not helping sports and fuels intrigue instead," said the 32-year-old chair of the Manila Sports Council.

Atienza said President Macapagal-Arroyo should be given time and complete trust in deciding who gets the old job of Eric Buhain, who is moving to the Games and Amusements Board as its chair.

"Let's not preempt the President and let her decide and choose the person who enjoys her trust and confidence," Atienza told the INQUIRER.

Atienza is seeking the top PSC post as chair of Masco, the organization behind the staging of the last three Manila Youth Games and the recent Manila Marathon. Both events drew record number of participants from the six districts of Manila.

As an athlete, Atienza captured a gold medal in the 1994 Asian Taekwondo Championships by beating a South Korean in the finals. No Filipino has beaten a Korean in the sport since then.

His chief rivals are established sportsmen Junjun Capistrano, Ateneo's athletic director and secretary general of the Manila Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee in 1991, and PSC commissioner Butch Ramirez.

Atienza refused to comment on his plans for the PSC if he gets the job but maintained that the candidates "are better off doing their respective roles for Philippine sports."

As Masco head, Atienza is in the thick of preparations for the 2005 SEA Games with the opening ceremonies set at the Quirino Grandstand at the Rizal Park. He said about 300,000 volunteers will be tapped to handle Manila's end of hosting the Games.

'The Captain' to get final PBA salute

IT'S called "the PBA's Final Salute to the Captain."

A month after announcing that he's done with pro basketball, Alvin Patrimonio, perhaps the greatest player of his generation, will be on centerstage one last time tomorrow when the PBA pays tribute to the man affectionately called "The Captain."

The ceremony will take place right before Patrimonio's Purefoods faces FedEx Express at 6:30 p.m. at the Philsports Arena.

Patrimonio's former coaches and teammates will also be on hand for the occasion.

"Alvin has been an ideal model not just for his team but also for his fellow players and the PBA as well," said PBA commissioner Noli Eala, who will hand Patrimonio a token of appreciation for his contribution to the league. "We will certainly miss his presence on the court."

But the highlight on Wednesday will be the retirement of Patrimonio's No.16 Purefoods jersey.

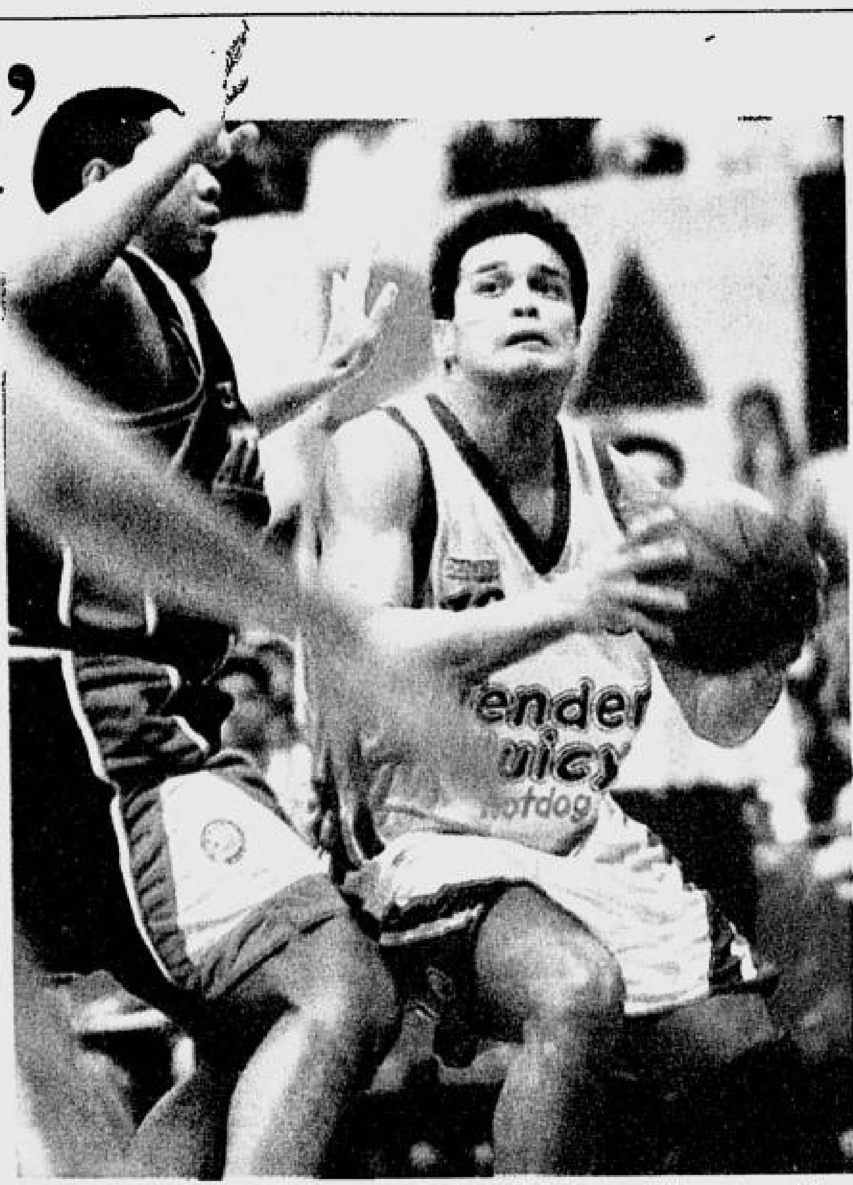
Patrimonio was in a TJ Hotdogs uniform in all his 17 seasons in the PBA.

The former King Cardinal of Mapua, now Purefoods' team manager, owns four Most Valuable Player awards in a tie with the legendary Ramon Fernandez. He boasts multiple championships, career milestones and distinguished stints as a national player.

The Final Salute to the Captain is a major highlight of the PBA's special Christmas treat this week.

The league caps its Yuletide season offering with a slambang doubleheader pitting San Miguel against Red Bull and Talk 'N Text against Ginebra on Christmas Day at the Cuneta Astrodome.

As Christmas gift to its loyal fans, the PBA will open the general admission section free to the public.



PATRIMONIO works against Don Allado of Alaska in one of his unstoppable moves in the PBA.

PDI PHOTO

4th Player of Week citation for DL Cruz

FOUR Player of the Week citations from the PBA Press Corps in the elimination round of the Gran Matador-PBA Philippine Cup is definitely a testimony to the consistency of Shell Velocity's Tony dela Cruz.

Considered a shoo-in for the all-pro RP team to be formed by the PBA next year, Dela Cruz again helped the Turbochargers chalk up a pair of wins and finish their elimination schedule with a 12-6 card.

Thus, the PBA Press Corps cited him anew for the period Dec. 12 to 19.

Dela Cruz sparked Shell past league-leader Talk 'N Text, 103-98, last Wednesday with 17 points, six rebounds, six assists and a steal in 38 minutes. Last Sunday, Shell downed FedEx, 90-85, with Dela Cruz scoring 22 points. *June Navarro*

Art keeps top PNSA post; Tac pistol chair

FORMER Olympian Arturo "Art" Macapagal was unanimously elected to a second four-year term as president of the Philippine National Shooting Association (PNSA) at the Manila Polo Club recently.

Ildefonso G. Tronqued was voted board chair.

Multititled shooter Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla, the country's pistol champion for 26 years now, made it to the PNSA board for topping the pistol group election, but he declined due to his business commitments. He was instead appointed chair of the pistol group by Macapagal.

Meanwhile, Emerito Concepcion ruled the free rifle three-position event in the recent National Open championships with 1123 points. He beat Dennis Hernandez (1117) and Benny Cagurin (1096).

The other gold medalists were Carolino Gonzales (581) and Therese Cantada (370), men's and women's air pistol; Pagcor's Carolino and Marcelo Gonzales and Reuben Hermoso (1661), air pistol team; Diomedes de Guzman (483) and Sheila de Lumban (492), modified Camp Perry individual pistol; and Navy/Marines Gold (1394) and Navy Marines/Yellow (1450), men's and women's Camp Perry teams.

The other key officers: Romeo Rivera, vice chair; Jose Y. Mundo, executive vice president; Ramon Corral, VP for international affairs; Donald Padilla, VP for national affairs; Severino Villarama, VP for venue development; Danilo Gamboa, VP for new shooters development and marksmanship training; Emiliano Llamas, treasurer; Augusto Justiniano, corporate secretary and airgun aggrupation chair; James Chua, chair of moving targets; Antonio Gana, rifle aggrupation chair; and Ildefonso Tronqued, practical aggrupation chair.

Gabi stops Thai rival in 2nd round

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

DIOSDADO "Prince" Gabi took yet another step in his quest for a world championship when he demolished Thai Samransak Singmanasak in the second round of their scheduled 10-rounder at the Royal Mandaya Hotel in Davao City Sunday.

Gabi, the World Boxing Council No. 8 flyweight contender, improved his record to 23 wins with 17 KOs against 2 losses, and 1 draw.

"We plan a US training with Freddie Roach (for Gabi), then on to a world championship," said North Cotabato Governor Manny Piñol, Gabi's chief handler.

Gabi is scheduled to hook up early next year with Manny Pacquiao's renowned trainer at the American's Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles.

Roach, who came over to supervise Pacquiao's knockout of Thailand's Fahsan 3K Battery last Dec. 11, rates Gabi as a future world-beater like Pacquiao.

Last October, the talented southpaw Gabi was scheduled to face WBC flyweight king Pongsaklek Wongjongkam during the WBC's annual convention held in Phuket, Thailand but the Thai's handlers backed out at the last minute.

Mr. Silencer is also Mr. Surprise

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

A VERY admirable guy indeed, this Hector Calma.

I haven't seen him in ages and then, all too suddenly, here he was, standing in front of me.

"How are you," he said, offering a handshake. "Where were you all these years? I only see you through your picture in the Inquirer accompanying your column. Nice to see you again and Merry Christmas to you and your family."

We embraced a little, a little tap here and there, and then he was gone.

He had come to me at halftime of the San Miguel Beer-Coke basketball tussle (SMB won) in Dagupan City on Dec. 16, the birthday of my departed father, known simply as "Tonyong" of Pidigan, Abra.

"Why that was Hector Calma you were embracing, one of the most original gentlemen of Philippine basketball," said PBA Commissioner Noli Eala, seated beside me during the game.

Hector Calma is now the manager of Coke, whose coach, Chot Reyes is one of four mentors being considered for the PBA-backed national team to the Jones Cup next year.

Hector, called The Director in his heyday in the PBA, has been a hardcore San Miguel Beer player. He was the heart and soul of San Miguel Beer when the Beermen won the Grand Slam years ago (was it 1986 or 1989?).

Chosen one of the PBA's all-time best 25 players during the 25th anniversary of the league, Hector, born in Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan, on March 2, 1960, was described in the recently released book "Legends and Heroes of Philippine Basketball" as "the epitome of a point guard."

At only 5-foot-8, Hector was the complete playmaker, who can either make his team win or lose without even firing a single shot. Said the book co-authored by Christian Bocobo and Beth Celis: "Hector Calma had the instinct of a leader, was a bail-out jumper of a player unfazed by pressure, and equipped with the passing wizardry of a court general with exceptional court vision."

To me, Hector did not only have an invisible eye on his right temple, he also had two eyes at the back of his head.

He saw a teammate streaking for a fastbreak toward the hoop with his back turned on the guy, he saw a cutting teammate sneaking out of nowhere with his face looking the other way, he saw a teammate grabbing an inch of space to receive a pass to aim and fire with his man blocking his view. Most of all, when he saw all his teammates in handcuffs, that's when he would shoot. Nine out of 10, the shot would find its mark—whether from point-blank range or afar. To Robert Jaworski, the PBA's Living Legend, the successor of Hector Calma "has yet to be born."

His speed was without match, his jumper was one of the deadliest, his cool mien even under pressure-cooker conditions remains unmatched to this day.

A three-time member of the PBA Mythical Five when the Mythical Five was the Mythical Five of old (1987, 1988 and 1989), Hector Calma will always be Mr. Silencer to me. He rarely talks, likes to act more than open his mouth. But while he is Mr. Action, he is also Mr. Surprise. Some 12 years ago, he suddenly appeared in my house.

"As promised, I'd like to greet your daughter, Aya, a happy birthday," said Hector.

Arriving without fanfare, he quietly took a seat and next watched me dance with Aya, the debutante. The song played for the special number of father-and-daughter was, "I'm So Happy Just To Dance With You." By the Beatles, of course.

After the piece, Hector clapped heartily—again, in his own quiet way.

Heck, why can't we have more Hector Calmas in our midst?

***

FASTBREAK. Attorney Flor called me up to say Triple V's Vic Vic Villavicencio had finally nailed his first hole-in-one many years after he picked up golf. Vic Vic, whose flagship Kamayan has been packing it in this balikbayan-flavored season, scored his ace on Dec. 17 at Wack Wack West's No. 3. NGAP president Benny Gopez said to me: "Please tell Vic Vic welcome to the club." Benny had his ace about three years ago during the Unilever Barkada golf that was more than amply rewarded by Chito Macapagal.

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SPORTSWATCH

Nadera rules Iligan City chess tourney

INTERNATIONAL Master Bario Nadera lived up to his top seeding Sunday night by dominating the 2004 Iligan City Open chess tournament at the Alfresco Park and Dinner in Barangay Camagui, Iligan City. Nadera defeated fellow Cebuano Erwin Ababat in 25 moves of a Queen's Indian Defense in the 8th round then settled for a 15-move draw with another Cebuano, IM Richard Bitoon, in the ninth and final round to bag the P30,000 champion's purse. Nadera, a Philippine Air Force enlisted man, scored 8.0 points to top the 73-man meet. Manila's Edmundo Gatus upset NM Rustum Tolentino of Cagayan De Oro City to pocket the runner-up prize of P15,000 with 7.5 points. Fide Master Oliver Dimakiling of Davao City took the scalp of NM Ernesto Absin of Butuan City to take the third prize of P8,000 with 7. Bitoon finished with 6.5 points to share 4th to 8th places with Mardonio Fuentes, Henry Lopez, NM Cesar Caturla and NM Mirabeau Maga. Rounding out the top 10 are Absin and NM Levi Mercado. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

Santillan OPBF title defense set

IT WILL be a battle of southpaws when Oriental and Pacific Boxing Federation welterweight champion Rev Santillan of Iloilo City defends his newly regained title for the second time against Kazuhiko Hidaka on March 19, 2005, in Tokyo, Japan. "The fight is on," confirmed Santillan's manager, Rex "Wakee" Salud, in a telephone interview from Cebu. If he wins, Salud said Santillan's next fight would be for a world title. At No. 4, the power-punching native of Tacas, Jaro, Iloilo, who is based in Cebu, is the highest World Boxing Council-rated Filipino fighter in a heavier division. The 27-year-old Santillan parades a 21-1-1 win-loss-draw record with 15 KOs. His 26-year-old rival is 20-4 with 14 KOs. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

Cariño, Loyola top Exec active chess

LAWYER Raul Cariño and management graduate Rolenson Loyola ruled the MCC Executive Category 1 & 2 Active Chess tournaments, respectively, over the weekend at the Metropolitan Chess Club's headquarters at the J&F Divino Building in Quezon City. Cariño won his fifth and final match over businessman Erven Perlas to bag his first MCC Executive Category 1 title. Loyola of Kawasaki Motors (Phils.) Corp. outplayed computer encoder Darwin Secorata of Pinoy Group of Companies to claim the Category 2 championship. Both wound up with a final tally of 4.5 points. The runner-ups were businessman Ruben Medina (Category 1) and commerce graduate Fami Fazon (Category 2). Medina humbled sales supervisor Dong Ata of Bayer Corp. while Fazon beat electrical engineer Robert Arellano of Doors Controls Int'l. Corp. Rounding out the top 10 were: Category 1—Perlas, Ata, Roberto Racasa, Virgilio Sevandal, Alex Vitualla, Jaime Santos, Dennis Lemsic and Federico Dionisio. Category 2—Arellano, Noel de la Cruz, Gary Legaspi, Secorata, Dennis San Juan, Rafael Espejo, Dario Enriquez and Claro Prado.

Noche Buena 5-cocker slated at Roligon

THE STAGE is set for the Noche Buena 2004 5-Cock Derby on Dec. 23, 25 and 27 at Roligon Mega Cockpit with 148 entries already on the fight roster. The submission of weights—for cocks between 1.800 and 2.400 kilograms—is scheduled tomorrow from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Hosted by Rolly Ligon and sponsored by Thunderbird Power Feeds, the three-day event stakes a P1-million prize purse for a low entry fee of P7,700 and a minimum bet of P4,400. Rep. Ronnie Puno, with his entry Sundancer, leads the field that also includes Rey Briones, William Go, Allan Siaco, Nanding Dizon, Colonel Tabique, lawyer Virgilio Manguerra, Chari Cristobal and Peter Uren. All entries will bring home a *pamaskong regalo* (holiday gift) such as television set, DVD player, washing machine, flat iron, folding bed, electric fan upon payment of entry fee. Two-pointers in the eliminations will share the day's champion prize of P50,000. Meanwhile, cockpit manager Danny Ty said the regular Sunday Mega Hackfights will give automatic cash bonuses to winners.

Power Trio picks three new breeders

EDWIN Gallardo, 52, of De Castro Subdivision, Barangay Sta. Lucia, Pasig City, won the Greater Manila Area draw of the Thunderbird Power Trio promo of Thunderbird Power Feeds. Gallardo will receive one rooster and two hens. Biag Cilio, 49, of San Juan Biao, Camarines Sur, is the winner for Luzon, while Teodoro Monfort, 37, of Catarman, Northern Samar, is the lucky contestant from the Visayas-Mindanao area. The final grand draw is set Jan. 6, 2005, in which the winners can choose which local breeder their trio should come from. Meanwhile, the UBBA 4-Cock Christmas Derby gets under way at the San Mateo Cockpit today and Thursday. The derby hosted by the United Backyard Breeders Association and sponsored by Thunderbird stakes a guaranteed prize of P200,000 for an entry fee of P6,600.

TORRE'S MOVE: Asia's first grandmaster Eugene Torre (seated left) and Marikina Councilor Vic Sabiniano make the ceremonial first moves for the "Alay Kay Mayor Marides Fernando 2050-and-below Non-Master Active Tournament at the Marikina Sports Center recently. Among those looking on are (from left) tournament arbiter NM Rudy Ibañez, organizing committee chair Joel Gaudia, young masters Jadilyn Fronda, Jude Emil Fronda, Fide Master Wesley So and Councilor Bogs Reyes.

RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Friendly Lover 2. Mystika/Detonator 3. Here I Come 4. Beatitudes

Race 2—1. Magpakailanman 2. Bronte 3. Top of D Line 4. Soy Numero Uno

Race 3—1. Thywillbedone 2. Sir Guguy 3. Hazit Coming/The Magician 4. Boxster

Race 4—1. Scud Missile 2. Queen Banana 3. Beyond Reach 4. Nitty Gritty

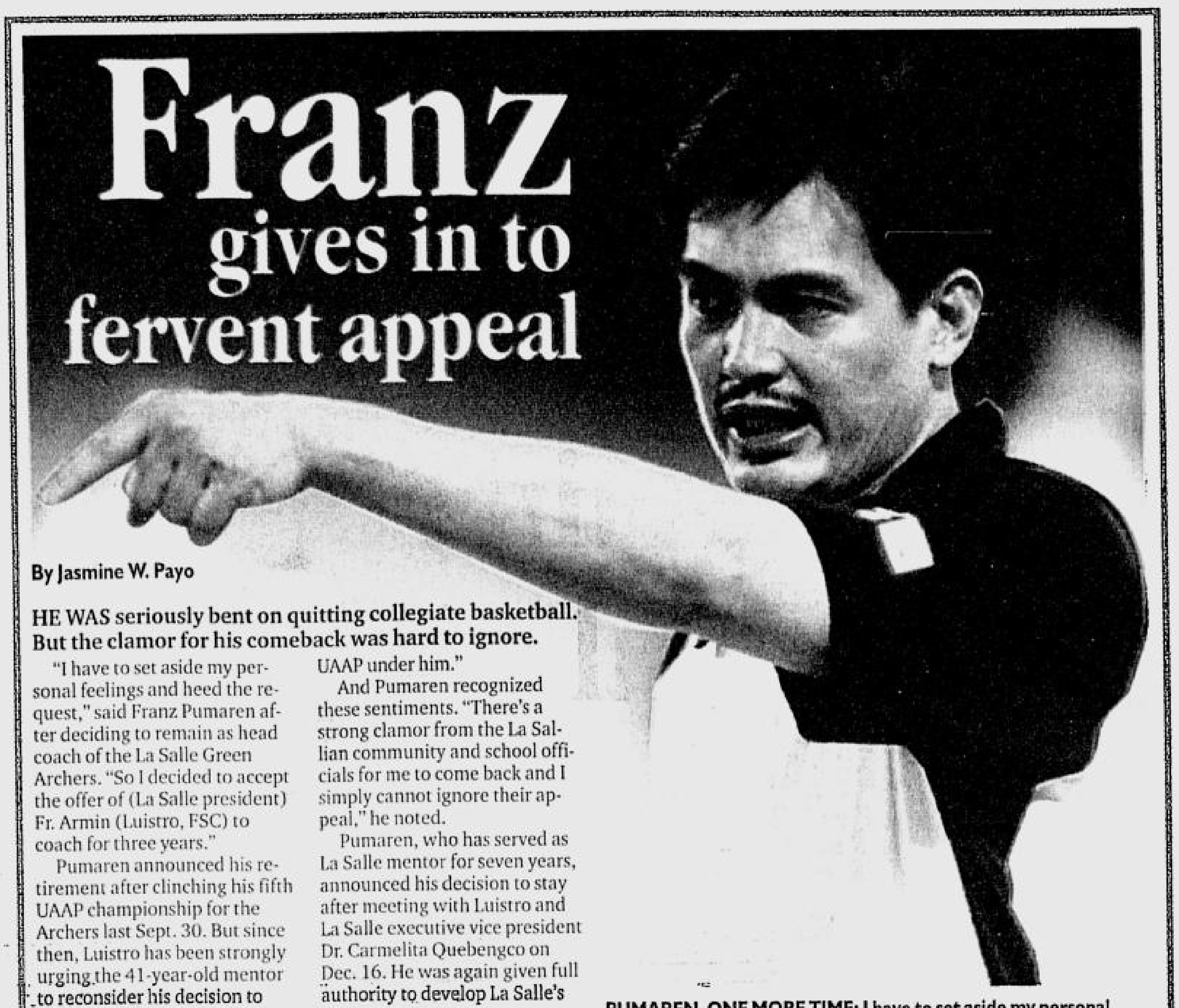
Race 5—1. Ravishing Raffy 2. Golden Africa 3. Tiger Winnie 4. Diva 5. Fancy Free

Race 6—1. You and Me 2. Marvelous Jay 3. Cunning Eagle 4. Storm Princess

Race 7—1. Pulilan Beauty 2. Decidido 3. Habagat 4. Archer 5. Boogie Shoes

Race 8—1. Real Black 2. Sugar Ray 3. Court General 4. Hurry Prince 5. Mercurian 6. Salamat

Franz gives in to fervent appeal



PUMAREN, ONE MORE TIME: I have to set aside my personal feelings and heed the request. ROMY HOMILLADA

By Jasmine W. Payo

HE WAS seriously bent on quitting collegiate basketball. But the clamor for his comeback was hard to ignore.

"I have to set aside my personal feelings and heed the request," said Franz Pumaren after deciding to remain as head coach of the La Salle Green Archers. "So I decided to accept the offer of (La Salle president) Fr. Armin (Luistro, FSC) to coach for three years."

Pumaren announced his retirement after clinching his fifth UAAP championship for the Archers last Sept. 30. But since then, Luistro has been strongly urging the 41-year-old mentor to reconsider his decision to quit.

Team leader Mac Cardona welcomed Pumaren's change of heart. "We're happy because at least we still have the same (basketball) system," said the UAAP Finals Most Valuable Player." He hasn't talked to the team yet but all the players want him back, *lalo na ako* (me particularly). I want to play my last year in the UAAP under him."

And Pumaren recognized these sentiments. "There's a strong clamor from the La Sallian community and school officials for me to come back and I simply cannot ignore their appeal," he noted.

Pumaren, who has served as La Salle mentor for seven years, announced his decision to stay after meeting with Luistro and La Salle executive vice president Dr. Carmelita Quebengco on Dec. 16. He was again given full authority to develop La Salle's sports program.

More than just being a winning coach, Pumaren was primarily instrumental not only in honing his players' skills but also in instilling proper values and self-discipline.

"He's more of a teacher, a disciplinarian to his players," said a La Salle insider. "That's why his players are careful to toe the line in every game."

It was rumored during the Animo La Salle affair last month that Pumaren was going to announce his decision to rejoin the Archers. But he promised to make everything official only after a meeting with Brother Armin, which took place only last Thursday.

The Archers reached the title playoffs once and also made it to the Final Four in the only two times they failed to win the championship under the seven-year watch of Pumaren.

Young Guns 2004 jungolf under way at Southwoods

AN INTERNATIONAL field of a hundred boys and girls dispute six division titles in the Young Guns 2004 junior golf championships teeing off today at the Legends course of the Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club in Carmona, Cavite.

The homegrown talents will be pitting skills against players from regional powerhouse Thailand, Hong Kong, Macau, Korea, Switzerland, Sweden, Canada and the United States in the 36-hole competition.

Patterned after the US Kids World Championship in Virginia, the tourney is confined to players 12 years and below. One of the players entered, Miguel Tabuena, is actually this year's US Kids winner in the 9 years old division.

Jennifer Rosales, the country's pride in the LPGA Tour, has been invited to personally award the trophies to the top performers.

Sponsoring the event are the International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI), Smart Kids, Gatorade, Absolute Mineral Water, Golf Depot through Joey Mendoza, Egay San Luis, Provil, Share Exchange and Manila Southwoods. Bellevue in Alabang, is the official hotel.

Bong Lopez, the noted swing coach who will handle the tournament's operations, noted the presence of many talented players, saying the addition of foreign challengers makes the battle for top honors very exciting.

Organizer Luigi Tabuena said the entry of foreign entries is a big step toward their goal of making the Young Guns a truly international event.

Claret pips Manila All Japan XI for Globe Super Cup semis slot

MANILA All Japan trimmed Mapua-Lions, 3-1, last Sunday at the Nomads field to help Claret FC advance to the Division 2 semifinals in the NCRFA Globe Handyphone Super Cup football tournament.

Claret and Manila All Japan actually finished the eliminations with identical 2-win, 1-loss records but Claret made it because of a higher goal difference—6 to 2.

Nomads drew with Onze-Archers, 2-2, to top group A with two wins and one draw while Knights FC swept all its three games. Edsa FC completed the semifinal cast as the second best team with six points.

Division 2 action in the tournament organized by the National Capital Region Football Association and sponsored by Globe Handyphone will resume on Jan. 8.

It will be the Nomads FC against Edsa FC and Knights FC against Claret FC in the semifinals.

Pasagrad spilled NCAA champion San Beda-Mendiola, 3-1, in a no-bearing game also last Sunday at the Xavier field.

Pasagrad finished the eliminations with two wins and two losses while San Beda-Mendiola dropped all its four assignments.

Tiong Lian cage tourney opens Jan. 8

THE 29TH season of the Hitachi-sponsored Metro Manila Tiong Lian Basketball League opens on Jan. 8 with an elaborate ceremony at the Chiang Kai Shek College Gym.

St. Stephen's High School defends its title against the highly competitive field that includes last season's runner-up, Xavier School, UNO High School, Hope Christian High School and host Chiang Kai Shek.

Inaugural matches pit St. Stephen's against Xavier School and UNO High School against Chiang Kai Shek. The sixth member team— St. Jude Catholic School—took a leave of absence.

The games will be shown on IBC-13 by Pro-Ads Marketing headed by president Henry Tan in collaboration with caging patron Christian Tan.

"We believe this is an exciting league with good basketball teams parading young cagers with a lot of potential," said Henry Tan. "That's (the reason) why we pooled our resources and sought the assistance of our friends.

"We're very happy that Hitachi agreed to be our major sponsor for this league, and we're thankful IBC-13 provided us with the airtime for the coverage," he added.

Team coaches include PBA legend Lim Eng Beng for Chiang Kai Shek, Goldwyn Monteverde for St. Stephen High, former UP Maroon and PBL assistant coach Patrick Aquino for Xavier School, Mapua Cardinals assistant coach Stephen Ong for UNO High and Hapee Team manager Bernard Yang for Hope Christian High School.

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Raptors gore Nets for 1st victory in post-Carter era

TORONTO—Lamond Murray scored 12 of his 18 points in the fourth quarter and the Toronto Raptors beat the New Jersey Nets, 110-99, on Sunday, their first victory of the post-Vince Carter era.

Carter wasn't at the Air Canada Center because Toronto's trade with New Jersey isn't expected to be finalized until noon Monday. The Raptors traded their biggest star on Friday to the Nets for Eric Williams, Aaron Williams, Alonzo Mourning and two first-round draft picks.

Murray, who could play more now that Carter is gone, recorded his highest scoring game with Toronto. He scored 12 points as the Raptors began the fourth quarter on a 17-4 run.

Morris Peterson added 20 points for the Raptors.

Richard Jefferson had 38 points for the Nets.

In New York, Jamal Crawford scored 11 of his 24 points in the final five minutes, including a rare four-point play and a sweet crossover move that led to a key basket in New York's victory over Utah.

Crawford's running floater made it 90-86 with 27 seconds left, and Stephon Marbury's two free throws with 6.4 remaining gave New York a four-point lead.

Marbury had 19 points and 12 assists, Michael Sweetney scored 13 and Kurt Thomas grabbed 14 of the Knicks' 29 rebounds as New York won at home over the Jazz for the first time in more than eight years.

Matt Harpring scored 21, Raja Bell added 20 and Carlos Boozer 19 for the Jazz, who dropped their seventh consecutive road game.

Crawford led the Knicks in scoring for the 11th time this season and the fourth time in the past five games.

In Miami, Shaquille O'Neal sparked a 13-point run late in the fourth quarter, and Miami won its eighth game in a row.

The winning streak is Miami's longest since March 1998, and the past four victories have come against teams above .500. The Heat trailed for much of the game and were down 103-102 with five minutes left before O'Neal helped them surge ahead.

O'Neal finished with 27 points. Eddie Jones went 8-for-10 and scored 25 points. Dwyane Wade added 22 despite missing 14 of 20 shots.

Steve Francis led Orlando with 31 points, many on acrobatic, slashing shots. Cuttino Mobley had 22 points, and Grant Hill 20 for the Magic, who lost despite shooting 51 percent.

In Sacramento, California, Peja Stojakovic scored 21 points, and Sacramento pulled away in the second half for a blowout victory over New Orleans.

It was another long night for the Hornets, who at 2-21 have the worst record in the NBA. New Orleans has lost two straight and 13 of 14.

Brad Miller had 17 points, nine rebounds and six assists for the Kings, who played their reserves most of the fourth quarter and recorded their biggest margin of victory this season. Chris Webber sat out because of a sore left knee.

Dan Dickau and P.J. Brown each scored 14 points for New Orleans.

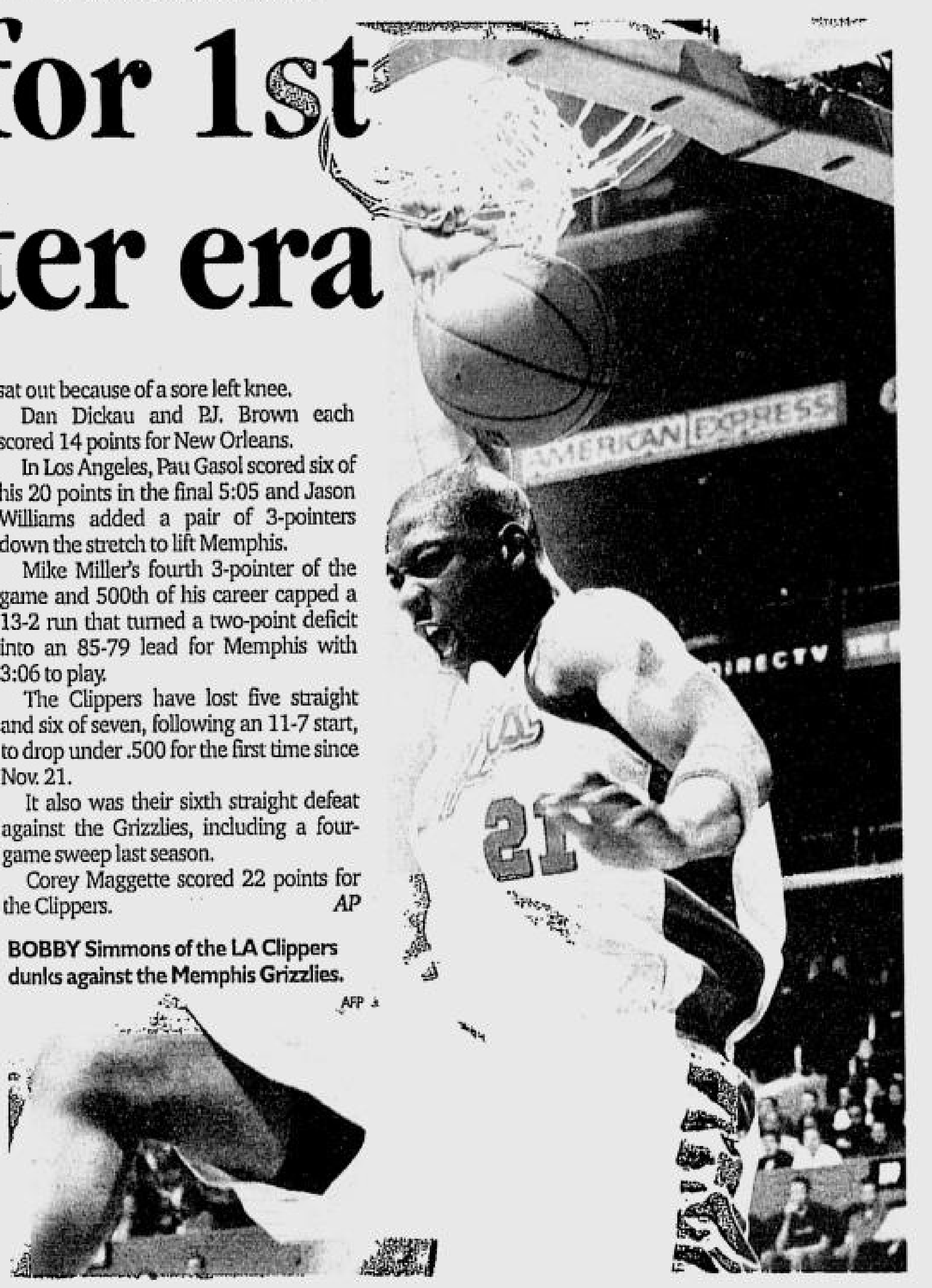
In Los Angeles, Pau Gasol scored six of his 20 points in the final 5:05 and Jason Williams added a pair of 3-pointers down the stretch to lift Memphis.

Mike Miller's fourth 3-pointer of the game and 500th of his career capped a 13-2 run that turned a two-point deficit into an 85-79 lead for Memphis with 3:06 to play.

The Clippers have lost five straight and six of seven, following an 11-7 start, to drop under .500 for the first time since Nov. 21.

It also was their sixth straight defeat against the Grizzlies, including a four-game sweep last season.

Corey Maggette scored 22 points for the Clippers. *AP*



BOBBY Simmons of the LA Clippers dunks against the Memphis Grizzlies.

AFP

TENNIS WINNER: Gaston Gaudio lifts the Argentine Cup in Buenos Aires, Sunday. Gaudio beat Argentinian countryman David Nalbandian in the final.

AFP

China mulls lifting of pro boxing ban

BEIJING—China is considering abandoning its long-time ban on professional boxing as interest in the sport grows, state media said Monday.

Once regarded as a "dangerous sport" and outlawed by the communists soon after they took power in 1949, national professional matches may again be hosted, said Chang Jianping, president of the Chinese Boxing Association (CBA).

He said the issue was being "seriously" discussed, Xinhua news agency reported.

The CBA was not immediately available for comment.

Boxing's growing popularity was evidenced by the large crowds at a recent WBA Pan Asian and Pacific super heavyweight title match between New Zealand's Peter Kariuki and Dutchman Maneno Oswald in southwestern China's Kunming city.

While national boxing tournaments are still outlawed, China permits the hosting of international bouts, and has so far held three such events.

Amateur boxing is already legal and Chinese sluggers are making strides on the world stage, with Zou Shiming claiming the country's first Olympic boxing medal in Athens when he won bronze in the light flyweight (48kg) class. *AFP*

Beijing Olympic organizers vow all-electric cars, buses

BEIJING—When spectators and athletes arrive in Beijing for the 2008 Olympics they will be shuttled around in an all-electric fleet of cars and buses, state media said Monday.

The Chinese capital has promised a "Green Olympics" and the vehicles are aimed at living up to that commitment.

Some 5,000 cars, 1,100 minibuses and 2,000 other buses are expected to be powered by electricity and produce zero pollution by 2008, the China Daily said.

The vehicles will run along main traffic lanes to the Olympic Games Village, from the village to competition venues and within the Games village.

Since 2002 the city has implemented a series of green measures, including increased use of natural gas, tougher energy efficiency standards and a cleaner bus and taxi fleet.

Beijing, however, still has much to do ahead of the Games with a thick, gritty haze often blanketing the capital. *AFP*

Mr. Dante Francis Ang & Mr. Jimbo Aldaba (UPMG Team)
Mr. Miguel Belmonte & Ms. Sandy Prieto (UPMG Team)
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Coach Errol Chan
Prime Image Team with Mr. Ricky Alegre
Sheridan Team with Mr. Ricky Alegre
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UPMG presents 1ST PRINT MEDIA BADMINTON CUP
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A Smashing Finish For The UPMG 1st Print Media Cup

Badminton, the latest sports craze, proved that it's here to stay as the print media industry came together to celebrate their love for the sport in the recently-concluded UPMG 1st Print Media Cup held last Nov. 27, 2004 at the Sheridan Badminton Courts. Sportsmanship and camaraderie were the stars of the day as the participants had a good time and formed lasting bonds of friendship and brotherhood.

Congratulations to the winners:

Mixed Doubles Level A
- Maria Teresa David/Rommel Dilla (Sheridan) – Champion
- Annalyn Delgado/Doddie Gutierrez (Phil Star) – 1st Runner-Up
- Ana Filamor/Ariel Abentavado (Phil. Star) – 2nd Runner-Up

Mixed Doubles Level B
- Grace Bernal/Rey Garcia (PNP/Malaya) – Champion
- Roxy Arabia/Macky Virrey (Atlas Publishing) – 1st Runner-Up
- Sheryl Arcoirez/Dave Loyola (Brand Asia) – 2nd Runner-Up

Mixed Doubles Level C
- Rina Dy/Jojo Sansano (Euro-RSCG) – Champion
- Ela Federigan/ Alexie Yu (FCB) – 1st Runner-Up
- Luzviminda Escano/Robert Esguerra (Mla. Standard) – 2nd Runner-Up

Women's Doubles Level A
- Alma Bringas/Maria Teresa Dayan (Sheridan) – Champion
- Cathy Escasinas/Ellen Missionero (Atlas Publishing) – 1st Runner-Up
- Kathy Kuan/Fai Pangarungan (Atlas Publishing) – 2nd Runner-Up

Women's Doubles Level B
- Roxy Arabia/Tess Polo (Atlas Publishing) – Champion
- Tammy Mendoza/Lea Campillo (Phil. Star) – 1st Runner-Up
- Lolita Millora/Edilene Madayag (WPD) – 2nd Runner-Up

Women's Doubles Level C
- Ma. Christine Francia/Ma. Cecilia Francisco (Malaya) – Champion
- Antonette Quizon/Alona Estanislao (McCann/Exp. Comp.) – 1st Runner-Up
- Qelly Minzano/Sahlee Alejo (DKT) – 2nd Runner-Up

Men's Doubles Level A
- Gener Godoy/Joel Estrada (Atlas Publishing) – Champion
- Alex Bartolay/Alejandro Grave IV (Sheridan) – 1st Runner-Up

Men's Doubles Level B
- Rey Garcia/Frumencio Bernal (PNP) – Champion
- Dionisio Garcia/Arnold Mendiola (UNIDA) – 1st Runner-Up
- Allan Dy/Melvin Madrid (EURO-RSCG) – 2nd Runner-Up

Men's Doubles Level C
- Carlo Mercado/Bong Viray (PDI) – Champion
- Rex Lopez/Joseph Velasquez (DDB Phil.) – 1st Runner-Up
- Roger Pe/Chrisval Santos (DDB Phil.) – 2nd Runner-Up

Some of the highlights of the grand event were the Publisher's Cup featuring doubles teams from the UPMG and the 4A's and KBP. In the UPMG vs ABS-CBN round, Mr. Miguel Belmonte and Ms. Sandy Prieto from the UPMG camp won over Mr. Gino Evaristo and Ms. Sheryl Ong of ABS-CBN. In the UPMG vs 4A's match, 4A's Dream Team Mr. Allan Dy and Mr. JV Madrid ousted the UPMG team of Mr. Jimbo Aldaba and Mr. Dante Ang. There was also a demonstration by badminton legend Coach Errol Chan which taught the amateur and novice players alike added tips and tricks to improve their game. Raffle prizes were also awarded, assuring that no one left the event empty-handed!

Organized by

Guiriba smashes nat'l mark; Danila to SEAG

BACOLOD CITY—Lambert Guiriba started the Philippine Amateur Swimming Association national tryout on a high note with a record-setting effort in the boys' 15-17 50-meter fly event on Sunday at the Panaad Olympic Pool here.

Guiriba, an Asean age-group veteran, clocked 25.98 seconds to shatter the 26.81 RP standard set by De La Salle University's Benjamin Uy in 2001 and share the limelight with Sydney Olympic veteran Liza Danila.

The 21-year-old Danila surpassed the SEA Games qualifying time of 1:07.38 by clocking 1:07.00 in the female 100-meter backstroke. She became the first qualified female swimmer for next year's Manila Southeast Asian Games.

Danila was followed by Iya Pe with a time of 1:17.21 and Claudine Chionglian with 1:17.25 in the four-day event that serves as the first qualifying round for the 2005 SEA Games.

Jonas Ramos wound up second to Guiriba in 29.53 while JC Kalaw finished third in 31.46.

Eleven-year-old Banjo Borja achieved the automatic qualifying time of 1:10.92 in the 100-meter backstroke with a 1:10.14 clocking for the boys 11-12 class. He beat Alfred Ramaila (1:11.01) and Joshua Desamero (1:12.11).

More than 100 tankers, representing 14 clubs from Manila, Mindoro, Iloilo, Cebu and host Negros Occidental, attended the tournament hosted by the Western Visayas 'Amateur Swimming Association presided by Philip Lacson and the Children's Swimming Foundation.

Pasa president Monchito Ilagan and Secretary General Chito Rivera also graced the event.

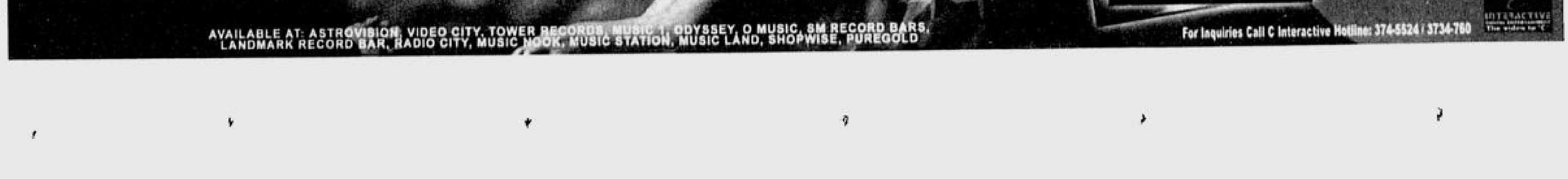
Olympic champ sells gold medal for $83T

WARSAW—Olympic swimming champion Otylia Jedrzejczak auctioned her gold medal for 257,550 zlotys ($82,770) on Sunday, Poland's PAP news agency reported.

Jedrzejczak won the women's 200-meter butterfly title at the Athens Games in August and finished second in the 400 freestyle and 100 butterfly.

The money raised from the sale of her medal will go to a children's cancer clinic.

Poland's State Mint has offered to make a solid gold replica of the medal for the 20-year-old. The original medal was gold plated. *Reuters*



The table is full,
not with the family he was planning...

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1 year later, the fun continues at Funnside

SHOW TIME

THE BAR, then called Funny Side, opened along Timog Avenue in Quezon City exactly a year ago. Today, it has morphed, dropping the "y" from its original name and aspiring to offer "total entertainment."

"Funnside was designed to redefine the total concept of fun as we know it," says promotions manager Michele de Guzman. Architecture, cuisine, sound and lighting designs were considered in reinventing the bar, with one goal in mind: fun.

The bar's grand split-level design can accommodate more than 300 guests, and non-smokers need not rush to the restrooms or outside the building for a gasp of smoke-free air.

The stage is backdropped by a gigantic video wall for total multimedia ambiance. The dance floor reminds you of the flashy disco days when Travolta strutted his stuff.

If you feel time-warped within Funnside's cavernous walls, that's the mood architecture working on your senses—thanks to architect Toru Tasai, the Japanese genius behind Funnside's interiors. Funnside's interiors allow it to be a classy restaurant, concert and recital venue, acoustic bar, function place, and even a fashion show site, in one vast, well-designed location.

Funnside also offers the best of Euro-Asian cuisine, courtesy of culinary guru Marites Gutierrez, the equally famous daughter of actress Gloria Romero.

"Fun isn't limited to what nightlife provides," says De Guzman, who also happens to be one of Funnside's regular singers.

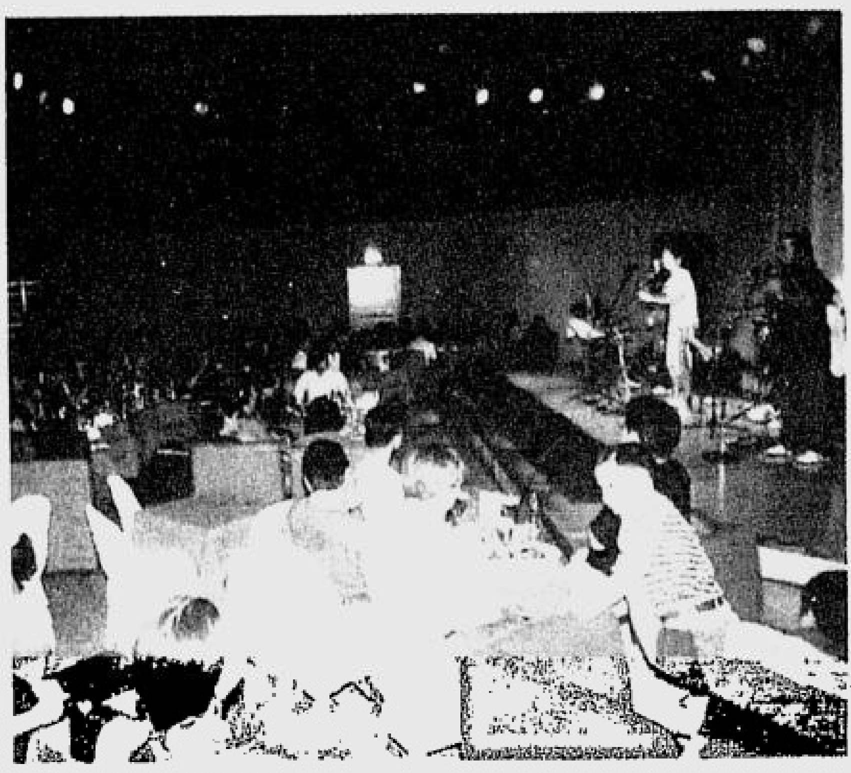
"Fun is also getting what your palate wants and deserves, and that's what we offer—fun food."

Funnside celebrates its first anniversary today, Dec. 21. After only a year's operation, Funnside boasts of having hosted the best local artists such as Paolo Santos, Janine Desiderio, Nyoy Volante, Dessa, Vernie Varga, Kyla, Luke Mejares, De Guzman, Lloyd Umali, Sheryn Regis and Allona, as well as the bands Dynasouls, Men of Blue Blood (MOBB), Dream Sequence, Miguel Vera and the Native Acoustics, Men Called Horse, Rockin' Revival and Moonstrucks.

Those who equate fun with hearty laughter will find their favorite stand-up acts at Funnside, like Porkchop, Norman Mitchell, Joy Viado, Aekaye and others.

Food, music and entertainment have never been this fun, thanks to Great Power Entertainment Corp., Funnside owners and concept architects.

Funnside has a consumable entrance fee of P300. The fun actually starts as early as 5:30 p.m., when you may partake of the "barkadahan treat," a drink-eat-all-you-can promo for only P299.



FRIDAY NIGHT at Funnside

55 child-friendly shows cited

From page A27

selected shows, not only as a badge of honor, but also as a seal of "good housekeeping," indicating to parents that the programs cited, while produced by adults, can still be viewed by children.

We trust that the viewing public will patronize the 55 shows that have gotten the Anak TV Seal, so that other producers will realize that wholesome shows can enjoy good ratings, and finance the production of more good programs.

Now, for the P64,000 question: Why didn't any NBN show get an Anak TV Seal? As the government channel, NBN-4 is supposed to stress good, alternative programming.

Also, why wasn't GMA 7's "LG Digital Challenge" among the shows that were cited? The Sunday-morning quiz program makes learning fun for high school students, it's surprising that it wasn't included.

Third, if GMA 7's morning show, "Unang Hirit," made it, why didn't ABS-CBN's own morning program? Are they really that different?

'Flight of the Phoenix'

DENNIS Quaid plays a down-and-out pilot in his latest action-adventure starrer, "Flight of the Phoenix."

When he and his co-pilot are sent to Mongolia to evacuate the staff of an oil exploration operation that has been shut down, they have no idea that the "routine" operation will result in a life-and-death struggle—and an incredible rebirth.

Discovery

THE DISCOVERY Channel caps the year with its most-requested specials, from Dec. 27 to 31, with a special 10-hour repeat marathon starting at 11 a.m. on Jan. 2, 2005.

SM CINEMA movietime

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BRIDGET JONES 2
SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING

In this follow-up to the worldwide hit, we find Bridget (Renée Zellweger) where we left her: blissful and besotted in the arms of gorgeous lawyer Mark Darcy (Colin Firth). Mark is accomplished, supportive and tolerant of (nearly) all of Bridget's tiny jealousies. Bridget's pink clouds begin to turn grey as her attacks of self-doubt sorely test her relationship with Darcy. And just when it seems that the action couldn't get any more choppy, Bridget's former boss, womanizing heartthrob Daniel Cleaver (Hugh Grant) sails into view.

Now Showing at:
SM Davao | Cagayan | Baguio

PASIYAM
SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING

A mother dies, and her children come home to bury her. And like all dutiful children, observe the traditional nine-day novena for the dead or Pa-Siyam. The siblings reunite after years of estrangement. Like most families, this one has secrets. Unanswered questions. The children hope to ride over the tensions, leave the questions unanswered, bury the secrets as they buried their mother. To move on. For this family, it is not to be. Something horrible happened in this house.

Now Showing at:
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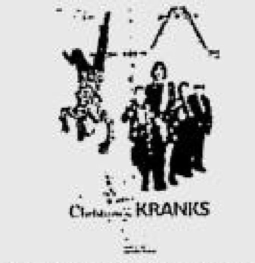

CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS
SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING

Luther and Nora Krank have made a decision. They're going to forgo Christmas. Luther is sick of the commercialism and the costs. So they're taking a cruise, but when their daughter calls saying that she's coming home they must get christmas together in 2 hours ...

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1 PASIYAM
2 THE FORGOTTEN
3 THE GHOST
4 CELLULAR

sm city lucena
1 POLAR EXPRESS
2 THE FORGOTTEN
3 SAW
4 CELLULAR

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2 ALEXANDER
3 CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS
4 HELLWOLF
5 THE GHOST
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7 TAXI
8 OUT OF REACH

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2 RESERVED
3 CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS
4 AFTER THE SUNSET
5 SURVIVING CHRISTMAS
6 NATIONAL TREASURE
7 RESERVED
8 SAW

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5 PASIYAM
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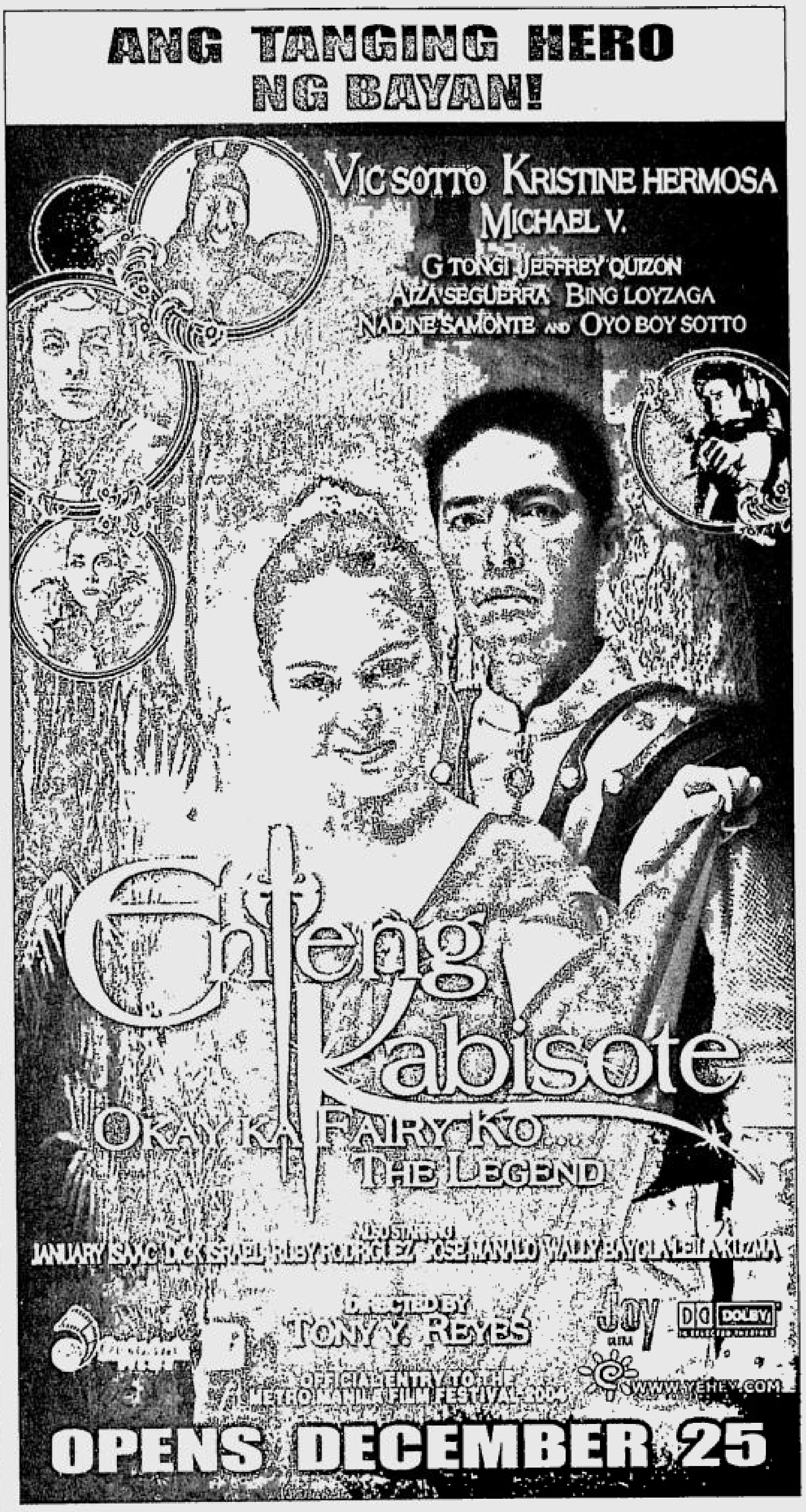
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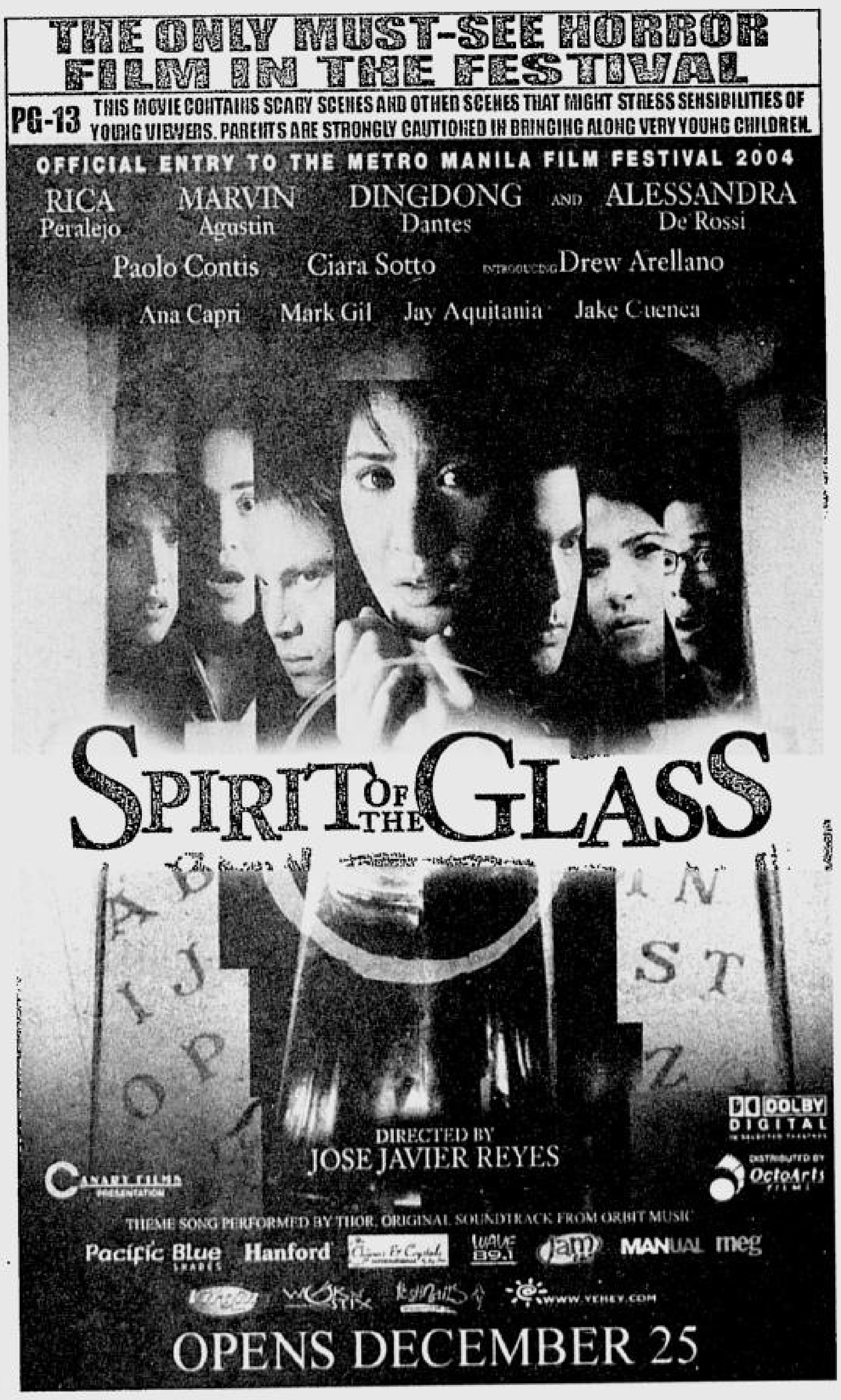
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'Panaghoy' is a feast

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

LIKE kids eagerly awaiting the coming of Santa, we in show biz dread the thought of laying our own version of Santa Claus, FPJ, to rest. But just like Christmas, FPJ's trip to heaven cannot be stopped.

The past days of FPJ's wake were more frenzied than all the Christmas rush ever. After all the Yuletide carols are sung and all the FPJ eulogies are said, may the true gifts of the season and the deeper meaning of FPJ's life and death remain in our hearts.

Meticulous Cesar

I WAS able to watch the first shooting day of "Panaghoy sa Suba (Call of the River)" in Bohol. It's CM (Cesar Montano) Films' official entry in the Metro Manila Film Festival. I saw how meticulous Cesar was as a director.

He made sure every minute detail was covered, like the tight shot of a *tampipi* carried by one of the extras. To ease the stress on the set, he even kidded his assistants, "Imagine we are making an ad to sell that *tampipi* as if it were made by Louis Vuitton or Coach."

Cesar may be a serious director, but he knows when his staff needs some lightening.

The river in the film is Bohol's enchanting Loboc River. I never miss taking a riverboat cruise and having lunch aboard the floating resto, complete with merry *musikeros* serenading the passengers with Pinoy folk songs, every time I visit Bohol. I am a Manila girl by birth but a Boholana by choice.

Unusual love story

"Panaghoy Sa Suba" is an unusual love story set during the Japanese occupation of a remote village in Central Visayas. A river is its main thoroughfare and people's lives ebb and flow with the waters. The story is told mainly in Cebuano, with its many colorful and varied cross-cultural characters portraying the twists and turns of a romantic Visayan slice of life.

Duróy (Cesar) is attracted to a lovely lass, Isét (Juliana Palermo), the obedient child of materialistic parents who are bent on improving their lot. She therefore attracts suitors who might help her achieve this.

John Smith (Phil Anthony) is an American doing both legal and illegal business in the village, and is her employer; and Fumio Ohkohara (Jackie Woo) is a handsome Japanese officer tasked to head the occupation of the area.

Duróy defers his courtship of Isét due to his younger brother's obsession with her. The brother, Ibô (Reiven Bulado), accidentally gets killed in a mad, suicidal fit of jealousy against Smith. Duróy wants to exact revenge and retribution, but war intervenes.

Who wins?

Duroy joins a band of guerillas and later becomes their leader mainly because of his talent in creating innovative fighting methods. After a series of sorties, he leads a final assault on the Japanese and effects the release of his younger sister and fellow villagers from a river prison. They also succeed in annihilating the Japanese forces.

Isét is appalled at the brutality of the Japanese and her fa-

'PANAGHOY'/A27

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	3	BIRTH	
	4	THE POLAR EXPRESS	
	5	NATIONAL TREASURE	
G1 (GLORIETTA 1)	1	GEORGE & THE DRAGON	
	2	PASIYAM	
	3	HAROLD & KUMAR	
	4	HONEY	
G4 (GLORIETTA 4)	1	BIRTH	
	2	ALEXANDER	
	3 (THX)	GUARANTEED SEATS BRIDGET JONES:	1 10, 3 30, 5.50, 8 10, 10 30
	4	2046	
	5	THE POLAR EXPRESS	
	6	NATIONAL TREASURE	
	7	BAD SANTA	
GB1 (GREENBELT 1)	1	BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON	12 20, 2 40, 5 00, 7.20, 9.40
	2	BAD SANTA	11 20, 1 25, 3 30, 5 35, 7 40, 9 45
GB3 (GREENBELT 3)	1 (THX)	GUARANTEED SEATS BRIDGET JONES	2 00, 4 20, 6 40, 9 00, 11 20
	2 (THX)	GUARANTEED SEATS BAD SANTA	12 45, 2 50, 4 55, 7 00, 9 05, 11 10
	3	GUARANTEED SEATS HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS	1 30, 3 45, 6 00, 8 15, 10 30
	4	GUARANTEED SEATS BIRTH	1 05, 3 10, 5 15, 7 20, 9 25, 11 30
	5	GUARANTEED SEATS NATIONAL TREASURE	1 30, 4 00, 6 30, 9 00, 11 30
ACC (AYALA CENTER CEBU)	1	CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS	
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55 child-friendly shows cited

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

VIEWERS who keep complaining about the lack of child-friendly shows on local TV screens should take heart in the fact that the Southeast Asian Foundation for Children's Television has found programs fit to sport its Anak TV Seal.

Last Dec. 16, the 55 shows were honored during ceremonies at Café Mischka in Quezon City.

The various TV networks that are members of SEAFCTV also formally presented the newest spokesperson of their cause, **Mikee Cojuangco Jaworski**.

Screenings and evaluation sessions were held for months by almost 2,000 jurors all over the country, to sift through the 130 entries from 11 networks and come up with the 55 "seal-worthy" programs.

The screenings were held mostly in the Visayas and Mindanao with the help of Negros Navigation and Cebu Pacific.

Additionally, nearly 300 jurors representing various disciplines deliberated during the final rounds to come up with the list of winners.

This year's total is deemed significant because it's the biggest number of shows cited since the Anak TV Seal was launched in 2000.

The year's most family-friendly and child-sensitive shows are:

ABS-CBN—"Wansapanataym," "Sineskwela," "Math Tinik," "Detek Kids," "Bear in the Big Blue House," "EpollApple" and "100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd."

ABC—"Island Flavors," "Campus TV," "Gourmet Everyday," "Mommy Academy," "Chikiting Patrol" and "Tutubi Patrol."

GMA—"Wish Ko Lang," "Happy Tales," "Blue's Clues," "Dora the Explorer," "Kay Susan Tayo," "Unang Hirit" and "Pet Ko."

RPN—"Road Trip," "Island Life," "Biyaheng Langit," "Signs and Wonders," "Asin at Ilaw," "Payo ni Doc," "What Would Jesus Do?" "Spongebob and Square Pants," "As Told by Ginger" and "The Wild Thornberries."

ZOE Broadcasting—"Serbisyo Legal" and "PJM Forum."

IBC—"Entrepinoy," "Good Take," "A Taste of Life" and "Quiz Bee."

Studio 23—"Breakfast," "Sports TV," "Kiss the Cook," "Seventh Heaven," "Bayani," "Game Plan," "In Fitness and In Health," "Hirayamanawari," "Team Explorer" and "Digital Tour."

Net 25—"Sky Trackers," "Euromaxx," "Convergence Reloaded," "The Planet," "Urban Peasant," "Arts 21," "Between the Lions," "New Yankee Workshop" and "Tomorrow Today."

Directors, producers and hosts of the winning shows were honored during the ceremonies last Dec. 16.

The awarding rites coincided with the worldwide celebration of the International Children's Day of Broadcasting, and the period earmarked by Malacañang as Responsible Media Week.

The Anak TV Seal is proudly "worn" by the

55 CHILD-FRIENDLY/ A25

'Panaghoy' is a feast

From page A26

ther's collaboration with them, and she decides to join the guerillas. But she is not readily welcome. She must first prove her worth as a woman and as a Filipino.

What appears to be a battle won in love and in war takes a strange twist with the return of the American suitor. Who does the woman choose?

Duróy, after getting rid of the ghosts of his troubled and deprived past, decides for everyone else: He answers the insistent call of the river.

A feast

The film is both a visual and aural feast, incorporating panoramas of the Visayan landscape, flora and fauna, customs and mores, period idioms and expressions, unmitigated romance and intense drama, moments of fierce action and suspense, and other elements of quality filmmaking that appeal to both local and international audiences.

Only the latest technology in sound engineering and visuals, including English subtitles, is utilized.

Caridad Sanchez, Joel Torre, Daria Ramirez, Ronnie Lazaro, Suzette Ranillo, Rommel Montano, Ramon Villanueva, Warfe Engracia, Chelo Espina and the award-winning former child actor **Rebecca Lusterio** lend able support to the main cast of actors.

For feedback, email: wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com)

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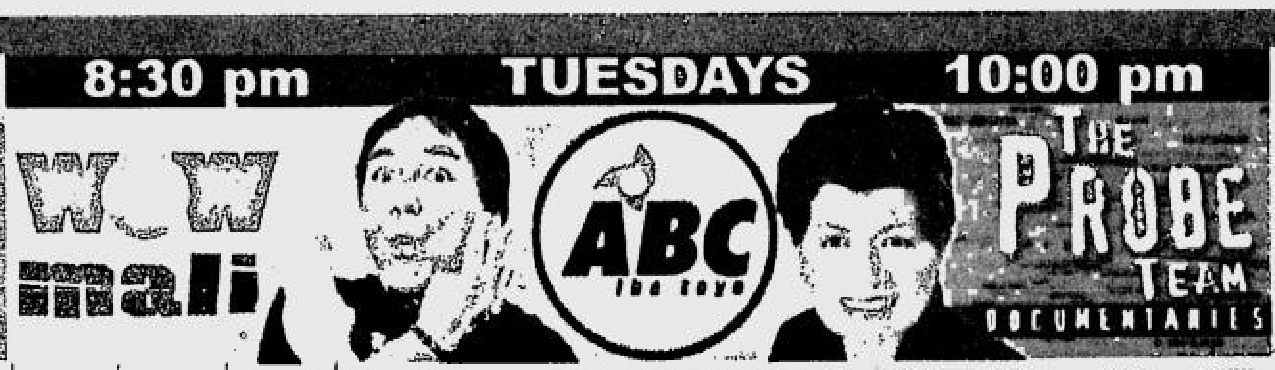
SCHEDULE OF PERFORMANCES

December 4	5:00 p.m.	Robinsons Starmills Pampanga
December 5	5:00 p.m.	Robinsons Place Pioneer
December 7	3:00 p.m.	NE Pacific Mall
December 9	3:00 p.m.	Robertson Mall, Naga City
December 12	5:00 p.m.	Robinsons Metro Bacolod
December 13	7:00 p.m.	Ayala Center Cebu
December 14	4:00 p.m.	Gaisano Mall of Davao
December 16	3:00 p.m.	CSI The City Mall - Dagupan
December 17	5:00 p.m.	Robinsons Place Lipa
December 17	7:00 p.m.	The Podium
December 18	5:00 p.m.	Robinsons Place Manila
December 20	4:00 p.m.	SM City Iloilo
December 21	5:00 p.m.	SM Makati
December 23	4:00 p.m.	SM City Fairview
December 28	5:00 p.m.	SM City Bacoor

MANILA
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Tuesday, December 21, 2004



Provided by ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No. 1	Sandara's Romance	Get Backers	Ragnarok	Masked Rider Ryuki	TV Patrol	Spirits	Krystala	Lovers In Paris	Hiram	Star Circle Nat'l Teen Quest	Bida Si Mister Bida Si Misis			Insider	Pipol
NBN	Value Vision				Teledyaryo	Value Vision		APEC Primer 2		Network Forum		Teledyaryo		Musconi Cup 2003				Auto Focus	
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	KNN	Anime Ring Kasho				Sentro	Lizzie Mcguire	Three Blind Dates		Wow Mali		Big News	The Probe Team Documentaries		Race Hour	Billboard On-Air
GMA 7	Leya (2:45 PM)	Joyride (3:15 PM)	Snow Angel (3:45 PM)		One Piece	Witch Hunter Robin	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin	Starstruck (8:45 PM)	Forever In My Heart (9:15 PM)		Bahay Mo Ba 'To?			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	8 Simple Rules	Ripley's Believe It or Not		Crossing Jordan		John Doe		Newswatch Now	Tuesday Night Treat		
IBC 13		V League				IBC Express Balita		Home Shopping Network		Home Shopping Network		Global Family Series		Entrepinoy	Good Take	Travel	IBC News Tonite	Up Close And Personal	
Solar		Wwe Raw				Mutant League	Heavy Gear	Maxsteel	Dungeons And Dragons	Stargate SG1		Soldier Of Fortune		RHD/LA		The Wire		Oz	
Nickelodeon	Dora, The Explorer	Little Bear	Blues Clues	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Brother's Garcia	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	All That	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	Rocket Power	The Wild Thornberrys	The Brother's Garcia
MYX		Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	Top Of The Pops	MYX Remakes	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Meet My Folks		The Today Show		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News	Entertainment Tonight	Will & Grace	Knock First	One Tree Hill		The O.C.		Tonight Show With Jay Leno		Blind Date	Fifth Wheel
Cinema One		Luv Text				Ang Mahiwagang Daigdig Ni Elias Paniki				Cuore Ep.2				Lastikman				Sukdulan	
Studio 23	Bewitched	Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Wazzup Wazzup	Fightbox	Smallville		Angel		News Central	The Oprah Winfrey Show		The Men's Room
AXN		The Amazing Race			Fear Factor			Gensomaden Saiyuki	Gensomaden Saiyuki	Boomtown		Ripley's Believe It or Not		Alias		The Amazing Race		AXN Shakedown	
Star World	Becker	The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	Road Trip		The Apprentice		UC Undercover/ Justin Timberlake Down Home In Memphis		Friends	Road Trip
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic	On Assignment	Thrill Seeker		The Sea Hunters		Treasure Seekers		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles Dr Brady Barr	Wild		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Thrill Seeker		The Sea Hunters	
Solar Sports		ATP Stockholm Open '04 SF1				Danish Open '04 Sfinal MS Match1-2				GWS ep.51	FIVB Beach Tour Rio de Janeiro WF		NBA TV Daily	NBA Toronto vs. Houston					NBA TV Daily
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens Of	The Fix	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall -	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine-	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert	It's Good To Be	A Second Look		Look For Less	Style Star	Road & Track	Back To Basics	Planet Parent	Hot Off The Grill
HBO		Tale Of Two Wives			All Or Nothing				Anger Management				Head Of State (8:25 PM)			Sex And The City: A Farewell		XXX (10:55PM)	
Star Movies			The Touch (3:40 PM)				Comic Book Villains			The Chamber (7:05 PM)				The Crocodile Hunter: Collision Course			40 Days And 40 Nights		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Richie Rich	Baby Looney Tunes	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Police Academy	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Teen Titans	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Gundam Seed	The Looney Tunes Show		Courage The Cowardly Dog	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Addams Family	The Funky Phantom	Boomerang - Boomeraction	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN				Eng. Premier League Hi/lights 04/05 World Pool Masters '04 Ann Zas, Holland		2004 Acc/Big 10 Chall. Wake Forest vs Illinois				Sportscenter Taiwan	NFL Football - Patriots vs. Dolphins						Sportscenter Taiwan		
Disney Channel	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Lizzie Mcguire	Even Stevens	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	The Legend Of Tarzan	Lilo & Stitch/Un-talkative Bunny	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax				Cover Girl			The Postcard Bandit (5:45 PM)		Mother, May I Sleep With Danger?			The Assignment				When Trumpets Fade (10:55PM)			
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	More Than Meets The Eye				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Mysterious Ways		Judging Amy		Cactus Kid			Wire In The Blood		Mysterious Ways
Discovery Channel		Civilisations				Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Rides		Human Discovery		Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Science Mysteries	
MTV Philippines		MTV Supahstar		Non-Stop Hits		Non-Stop Hits	05 MAA Nominee Specials	MTV Get Spotted	MTV Loveline	MTV Lokal		Non-Stop Hits	MTV Bolahan	TRL		Punk'D	Wildboyz	VH1 Hits/ Video Collection	
Sports Plus				Wendy's 3-Tour Chall. Day1				Superbowl1 Green Bay vs Kansas		NFL						Davis Cup Finals Spain vs USA			
EWTN	Pope John Paul's Legacy To The Family	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Mysteries Of The Rosary	My Little Angels	Angel Force	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of The Angels Monastery	Fr. Groeschel	Catholic Morality & The Catechism	EWTN Gallery	The Journey Home		Does The Church Still Teach That	Lord, Have Mercy	Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)	We Are One Body	Web Of Faith	

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'Crying Ladies' wins in India film festival

"CRYING Ladies" won the Best Asian Film and, for its first-time writer-director Mark Meily, the Best Director prize at the 9th International Film Festival of Kerala, the southernmost state of India, on Dec. 17.

Although India is best known for Bollywood, a dynamic film industry that can rival Hollywood, Kerala is a forum for more artistic, less formulaic ("non-mainstream") pursuits.

Kerala, a known hub for intellectuals and film enthusiasts, has always championed "world cinema."

"Crying Ladies" as the Best Asian Film winner is also the recipient of the Netpac Award—the Network for the Promotion of Asian Cinema.

Luminaries from international cinema graced the Kerala festival, including guests Christopher Doyle, the cinematographer of "Happy Together," "Hero," and "2046"; Tsai Ming Liang, the Taiwanese director of "What Time is It There?" and Abbas Kiarostami, a renowned Iranian director.

Among the jurors in this year's competition was Paul Leduc, the acknowledged leader of the Mexican new wave.

Nine movies competed for the top prize, but over 200 films were screened this year.

Director Mark Meily is very excited about his debut movie's latest achievement.

"It gave them a fresh perspective of the Philippines," he told INQUIRER Entertainment yesterday. "That there's more to our country than what they hear on the news, the kidnappings and the terrorism. That we also make heartwarming, poignant movies."

Meily is wrapping up work on his second film, "Pasyon USA," starring Robin Padilla and co-produced by Sharon Cuneta for Unitel.

"Crying Ladies," the runaway winner in last year's Metro Manila Film Festival, has similarly made waves in other foreign film festivals, including Montreal, Hamburg, and Brussels.

In the Brussels festival, lead star Sharon Cuneta clinched the Best Actress trophy at the 31st International Festival of Independent Film.

The Meily movie is also slated to be showcased at the Palm Springs International Film Festival in January.

BAWLING IN "BOLLYWOOD." "Crying Ladies," starring (from left) Angel Aquino, Sharon Cuneta and Hilda Koronel, continues to bring good news.

Borlaza predicts 'blockbuster' in FPJ rites

By Nini Valera

THE EARLIER attacks by Fernando Poe Jr.'s widow Susan Roces on the administration and the media were only the beginning of the unraveling of the truth, according to a movie director.

"She can't be stopped," Emmanuel Borlaza told INQUIRER Entertainment in Filipino in a phone interview yesterday. "What we saw of her last week is merely a trailer to a blockbuster that opens Tuesday night."

He is referring to tonight's necrological services by movie industry people for FPJ.

Borlaza noted how FPJ's widow, the usually calm and soft-spoken Swanie (Susan's nickname among industry people), lashed at the broadcast conglomerate ABS-CBN for what she described as unfair reporting.

"You must have heard also how she referred to some of the sympathizers," Borlaza said. "She said they know who they are and if they are sincere."

Borlaza said FPJ had died of a broken heart.

FPJ reportedly had turned down millions of pesos in campaign contributions during his presidential bid and had asked his supporters to return these to the donors. But talk has persisted that not all the money was returned but was instead pocketed by some of the people who were running his campaign.

"Knowing FPJ, he could not take this betrayal," Borlaza said. "He was a sensitive man. He would not have been a great actor if he were not sensitive. As FPJ, he could not show rage. He could not shout and punch these people. He probably just kept everything to himself."

Borlaza also recalled how FPJ had played a harmless joke on him.

"We bumped into each other in Los Baños," he narrated. "I was location hunting for a movie. I asked him who I could call to write a script for me. He told me to look up Ronwaldo Reyes. I told him I had never heard of the guy. But he assured me that he was a good writer and a nice man. So I remembered the name.

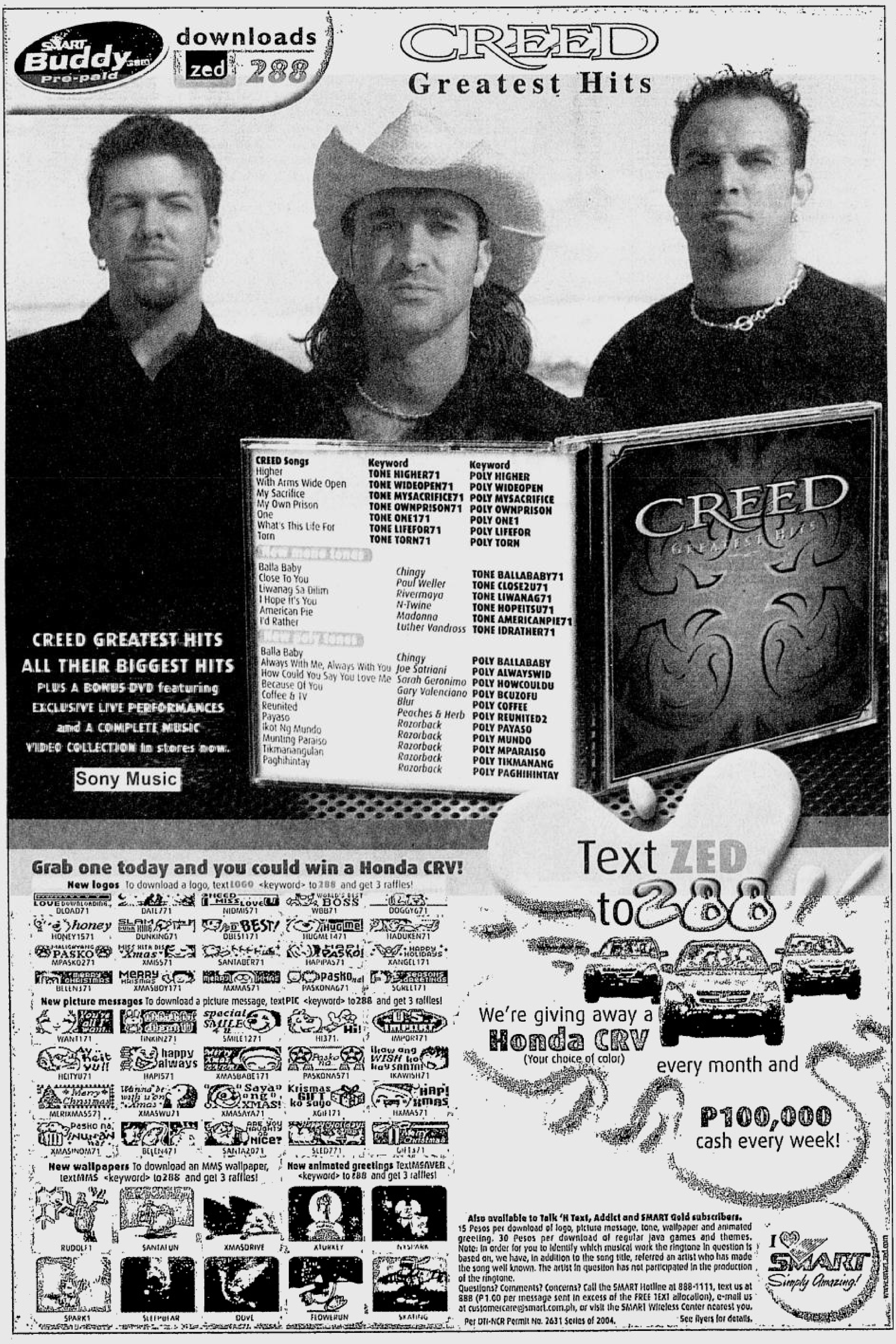
"Back in Manila, I began to ask around. I told the people I asked that it was FPJ who had recommended Ronwaldo Reyes to me. They laughed, and told me who Ronwaldo Reyes was."

Ronwaldo Reyes was the pseudonym that FPJ had used to write and direct his movies.

"Remember the congress of the movie industry workers last October?" said Borlaza. "FPJ was the first to contribute, and he was one of the first people to arrive at the venue. But he didn't stay long. He only wanted to see that everything was all right. That's very FPJ."

Borlaza is referring to the first congress of the Nagkakaisang Manggagawa ng Pelikulang Pilipino held on Oct. 16 at the Amoranto Multi-Purpose Hall in Quezon City. The congress was attended by hundreds of movie industry workers—from big stars to movie house checkers.

RETROSPECT IN AWARD-WINNING PLAY Hans Montenegro in multiple roles, Apreal Tolentino and REtroSPECT (above) star in "Single Brown Female," an award-winning play by Jose Victor Torres, at the Metro Concert Bar in Quezon City until tomorrow night, Dec. 22. JM Castro, also of REtroSPECT, directs. Produced by Puppethouse Inc., "Single Brown Female" is set in the '70s and is the story of Lara, who makes and sells babies for a living. She gives birth to nine children, all of whom she gives away. REtroSPECT will perform classic '70s music to depict each scene's soul. The play also stars David Granado, Michelle Bustamante and Kids at Work. Tickets are P300. Call Zayra or Connie, 0919-3115499; 0927-6731524, or Julie at 820-1128 or 829-6216. Show time is 9:30 p.m. Proceeds will go to Lift B.A.B.I.E.S, an NGO helping children cope with rare liver diseases. The play is sponsored by the PCSO, Skechers, Skechers Time, Creative Pixel Digital Photography, Toys for the Boys magazine, DNK Gym Parañaque, Smart Image Graphics, Picture Card Glorietta and Blaze 105.9 FM.



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My Own Prison	TONE OWNPRISON71	POLY OWNPRISON
One	TONE ONE171	POLY ONE1
What's This Life For	TONE LIFEFOR71	POLY LIFEFOR
Torn	TONE TORN71	POLY TORN

Balla Baby	*Chingy*	TONE BALLABABY71
Close To You	*Paul Weller*	TONE CLOSE2U71
Liwanag Sa Dilim	*Rivermaya*	TONE LIWANAG71
I Hope It's You	*N-Twine*	TONE HOPEITSU71
American Pie	*Madonna*	TONE AMERICANPIE71
I'd Rather	*Luther Vandross*	TONE IDRATHER71

Balla Baby	*Chingy*	POLY BALLABABY
Always With Me, Always With You	*Joe Satriani*	POLY ALWAYSWID
How Could You Say You Love Me	*Sarah Geronimo*	POLY HOWCOULDU
Because Of You	*Gary Valenciano*	POLY BCUZOFU
Coffee & TV	*Blur*	POLY COFFEE
Reunited	*Peaches & Herb*	POLY REUNITED2
Payaso	*Razorback*	POLY PAYASO
Ikot Ng Mundo	*Razorback*	POLY MUNDO
Munting Paraiso	*Razorback*	POLY MPARAISO
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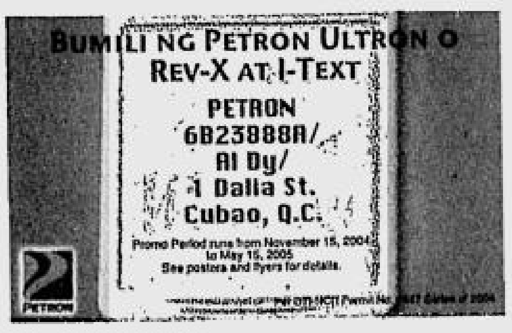
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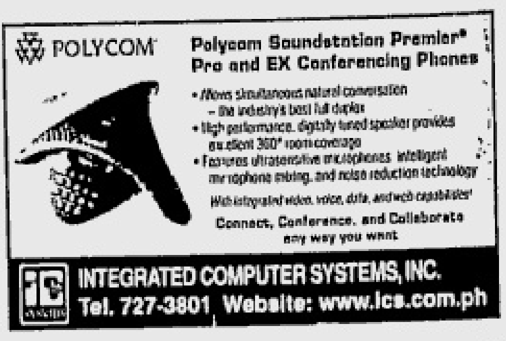
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ADB sees RP growth at robust 5.9% in '04

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE economy will likely grow by 5.9 percent this year, but the expansion will slow down to 4.7 percent in 2005 due to a more difficult global environment, according to a regional report released by the Asian Development Bank yesterday.

In its December issue of Asia Economic Monitor, which used global forecasts made by London-based think tank Consensus Economics, the ADB said East Asia would register its best economic growth since the 1997 currency turmoil. *(See story on this page.)*

Supported by strong personal consumption, and to a lesser extent exports, the ADB report upgraded the outlook for the Philippines' gross domestic product (GDP) following a better-than expected growth of 6.5 percent in the first three quarters of the year.

"With consumer spending slowing, partly due to high oil prices and weaker export growth in the last quarter, GDP growth for 2004 is forecast to be 5.9 percent. This figure is more than one percentage point higher than the July forecast," the report said.

"The winding down of the global electronics cycle, weaker growth in industrial countries, and the PRC economic slowdown are expected to lead to a lower 4.7-percent GDP growth next year," it said.

For next year, the Philippines is seen lagging behind other countries in terms of GDP growth: Indonesia (5.3 percent); Malaysia (5.4 percent); Thailand (5.7 percent); Vietnam (7.1 percent); and, PRC (8 percent).

However, the country is seen performing better than Cambodia (2.3 percent); Korea (4.2 percent) and Singapore (4.4 percent).

The forecasts for next year are subject to three main risks: continued high oil prices, a disorderly adjustment of the US current account deficit, and a hard landing in the PRC, the report said.

The region's stock markets have generally rebounded strongly in recent months following a weak performance around the middle of the year.

Reflecting the broad weakness of the US dollar and robust balance of payments, East Asian currencies have also generally appreciated against the dollar.

The report also noted that continued progress in financial and corporate restructuring and improved prudential indicators had reduced East Asia's financial vulnerability. It said non-performing loan ratios continued to trend down, and external debt to international reserve ratios were falling in most countries.

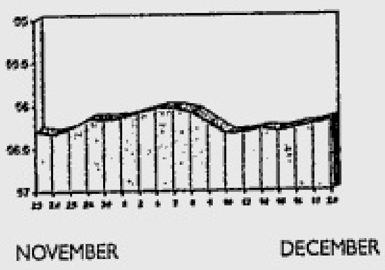
"The key policy challenge facing East Asia over the next year or two is to sustain the robust GDP growth at a time when US interest rates and domestic inflation rates are on an upward path," the ADB report said.

"Against the emerging global and regional economic backdrop, an appropriate policy response should have three key components: tighter fiscal and monetary policies, greater exchange rate flexibility, and structural reforms to invigorate private investment," it said.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



₱ 56.17 = $ 1
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As of 5 p.m., Dec. 20, 2004

GOLD: $ 441.10-441.60
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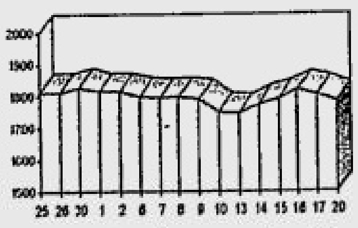
STOCK MARKET

Shares end lower

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

SHARE ended lower yesterday, weighed down by a spate of negative corporate and economic news, traders said.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index finished down 20.08 points, or 1.1 percent, at 1,786.25, after shedding 0.8 percent Friday.

Metro Pacific was among the most actively traded stocks, down 8 percent at 35 centavos.

Shortly before the session ended, Metro Pacific confirmed an INQUIRER report that creditor Metropolitan Bank obtained a court-approved foreclosure order on Metro Pacific's remaining 10-hectare property inside the Bonifacio Global City and 20 condominium units in

SHARES/ B2

East Asia growth highest since 1997 crisis

EAST Asia's economic growth this year should be the strongest since the Asian financial crisis, despite high oil prices and slowing export growth in the second half of 2004, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said yesterday.

Growth was likely to moderate to 6.5 percent in 2005 with oil prices, a hard landing for China, and a disorderly adjustment of the United States current account deficit the main risks, the Manila-based ADB said in its semi-annual Asia Economic Monitor (AEM).

Strong domestic demand and surging exports were expected to have lifted growth to 7.6 percent this year from 6.9 percent in 2003, the bank said in its review of the 10 Association of South East Asian Nation economies plus China and South Korea.

The previous AEM released in July had forecast 7.3 percent growth in 2004.

"Despite high oil prices and some loss of momentum, this year East Asia's growth is likely to be the highest since the 1997 financial crisis," the ADB said, citing estimates from Consensus Economics, a private group that collates forecasts from about 200 economic and financial forecasters in 70 countries.

The multilateral financing institution said net private capital flows to the five East Asian countries most affected by the Asian cri-

EAST/ B4

Gov't seen gaining from Masinloc sale

By Ronnel W. Domingo

IF THE $561-million sale of National Power Corp.'s Masinloc power plant is lopsided, the government is on the favorable end.

This was the statement of Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp., whose president, Raphael PM Lotilla, yesterday said the government stood to earn about half a billion pesos if the buyer did not meet the requirements of the contract.

Lotilla was reacting to doubts that the winning bidder, the little-known Filipino-Australian consortium of YNN Corp., had the financial muscle to see the transaction through to its completion.

"What initially protects the government's interest is an irrevocable letter of credit in the amount of $9 million (about P500 million), which would be forfeited if the bidder fails to put up a performance bond of $11.2 million," the PSALM chief said.

"In turn, the performance bond could be forfeited if (YNN) fails to come up with the 40-percent upfront fee of $224 million upon closing of the contract," he added.

Lotilla said the $9 million was a better gauge of the seriousness and financial capability of the bidder than the capitalization of the company.

It was earlier reported that YNN groups Filipino firm SunnySun, which has a paid-up capitalization of P600,000, and its Australian partner, which has a market capitalization of $10 million.

"Undercapitalization relative to the bid price is not unexpected among bidding

GOV'T/ B4

Wrong 'Pacific'

THE FIRST Pacific Co. Ltd. referred to in yesterday's Cocktales column is neither the same firm listed on the stock exchange of Hong Kong, nor is it the parent company of Metro Pacific Corp., according to Manuel V. Pangilinan, managing director of First Pacific Co. Ltd.

The First Pacific firm mentioned in Cocktales is currently embroiled in legal proceedings in Hong Kong.

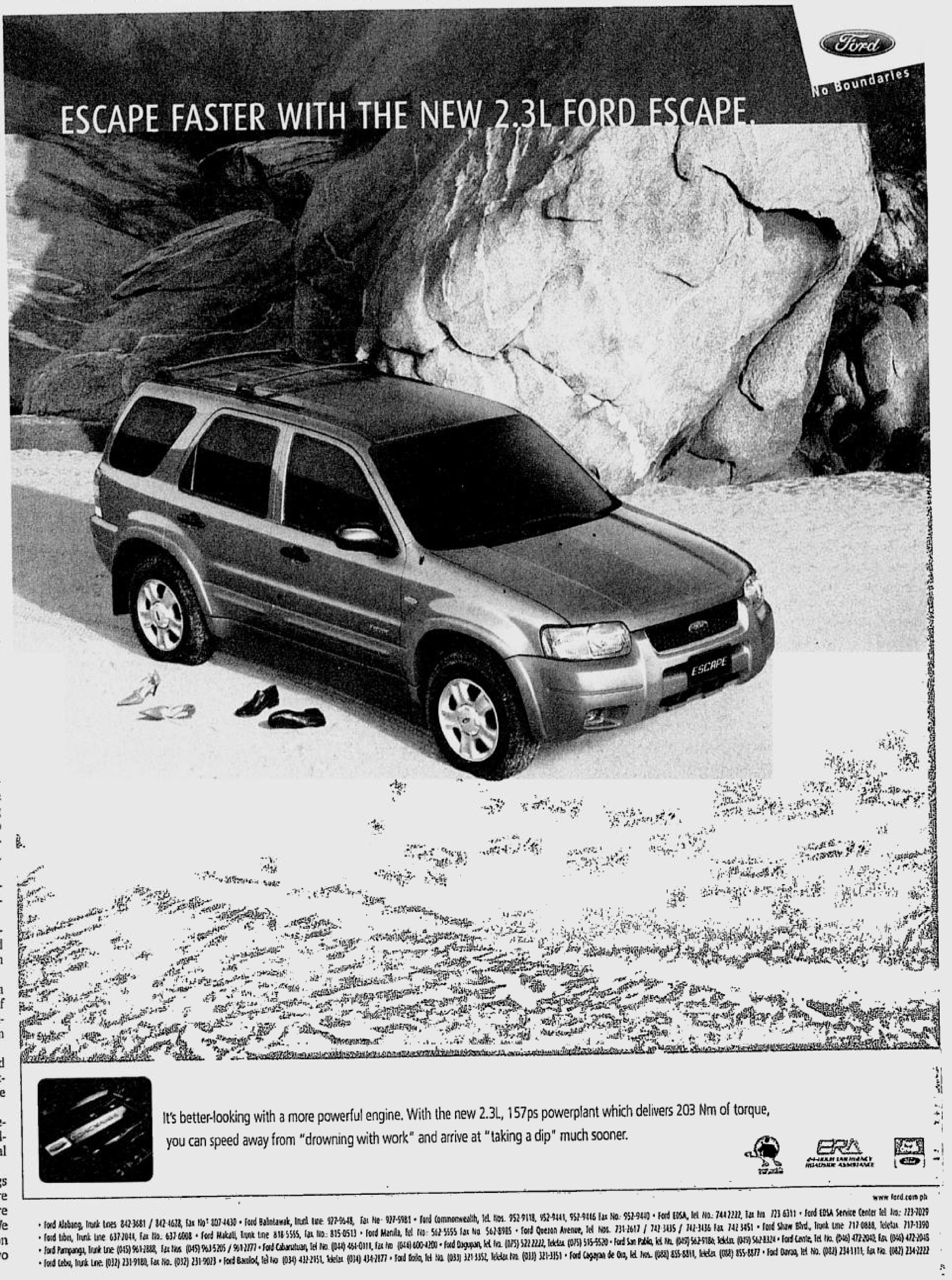
That First Pacific referred to has the company number 7009 and is an entity incorporated in St. Vincent, British West Indies, Pangilinan pointed out.

"The British West Indies company is not a subsidiary, an affiliate, or an associate of First Pacific Co. (FPC) Ltd., and has no relationship whatsoever with FPC," Pangilinan said.

He explained that FPC was "incorporated in Bermuda and listed on the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Ltd. with stock code 142."

Pangilinan explained that the column created the impression that FPC "is engaged in illegal activities that are now subject to legal action in Hong Kong."

"We must point out that the proceedings against the British West Indies company were initiated by the Hong Kong government more than two years ago," Pangilinan said. "We have since clarified the resulting confusion publicly at the time it arose more than two years ago."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NTC greenlights Piltel sale

By Clarissa S. Batino

PILIPINO Telephone Corp. has received the go-ahead of the National Telecommunications Commission to sell the controlling interest of the company to Smart Communications Inc.

This would allow Smart to acquire as much as 92 percent of Piltel from Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. soon—a step seen to be crucial in the alignment of the operations of the two wireless subsidiaries of PLDT.

Napoleon Nazareno, president of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., said the group would try to complete Smart's acquisition of Piltel before the end of the year.

The NTC on Dec. 13 approved Piltel's application in July to transfer ownership of the majority of its shares to Smart, including the common shares arising from an increase in authorized capital approved by shareholders last September.

Piltel's application was delayed because the NTC had to deliberate whether it could act on the phone firm's petition even if Piltel's franchise specified that it needed Congressional approval before a controlling interest is transferred.

The NTC also approved Piltel's application even if the phone company had not settled some P1.3 billion in outstanding regulatory fees to the Commission.

"Piltel has fully substantiated its application and there is no showing that the transaction will adversely affect the service offered to the subscribers," the NTC noted in its approval. "The Commission hereby approves the authority to register the transfer of and to issue shares of stock from increase in capital stock."

Smart now owns 32.7 percent of its affiliate after converting 4.825 million preferred shares into 820.25 million common shares in July. Smart originally intended to acquire 92 percent of Piltel in September.

"We will try to complete the transaction this year as soon as all necessary regulatory approvals are in place," said Nazareno in an interview.

Piltel, in its petition submitted to the NTC in July, asked the Commission to allow the sale to Smart even if its franchise required a Congressional approval.

In particular, Piltel is asking for the approval to transfer ownership of 9.26 billion common shares to Smart. This would give Smart an 85.63 percent stake.

"Several franchises which were granted to different telecommunications companies after the effectivity of RA 7925 provide in common that the transfer of controlling interest without the consent of Congress is allowed," Piltel told the Commission.

Piltel said the Telecommunications Act gave an "ipso facto" provision, which meant that any advantage or privilege given to one should be enjoyed by all players in the sector.

After Piltel obtained the go-ahead of its shareholders to increase its authorized capital to P12.8 billion from P3.5 billion, the group set the timetable for the end of September.

Nazareno said the delay did not affect the target of consolidating Piltel and Smart books by the end of the third quarter because of new accounting standards that the PLDT group had adopted.

"We are consolidating the books of the wireless business even if Smart had not completed the acquisition of Piltel," Nazareno said in an earlier interview. "Anyway, PLDT still owns the portion that Smart is buying."

Nazareno said Smart and Piltel were still reviewing the fees the former had been charging the latter for the use of network. Smart also collects management fees from Piltel.

Smart is buying 92 percent of Piltel from PLDT. The equity transaction comes in two stages: one is the purchase of 59 million Series K convertible preferred shares equivalent to about 47 percent, to be followed with the acquisition of 767 million common shares equivalent to about 45 percent.

As of Sept. 3, Smart had converted 4.825 million of the preferred shares into 820.25 million common shares equivalent to a 32.7 percent stake. At that time, PLDT continued to hold 30.5 percent.

Piltel made P743 million in profits in the first nine months compared to a net loss of P1.6 billion a year ago even after it restated its first half net income to P511 million from the P810 million it had originally reported.

BOTIKA NG BAYAN OPENING

Secretary Roberto M. Pagdanganan, Philippine International Trading Corp. head, Leopoldo Dimerin, and Mario Leygo look over some of the medicine on sale at the "Botika ng Bayan," during opening-day rites at the NDC Building on Tordesillas Street, Salcedo Village, Makati. Over 300 such drugstores have opened offering essential medicines at affordable prices.

Murga to stay on as Napocor chief

By Ronnel W. Domingo

NATIONAL Power Corp. president Rogelio M. Murga is putting off his retirement for another three months upon President Macapagal-Arroyo's request, . Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. said yesterday.

Perez said the President asked Murga to stay until some of Napocor's critical projects have been completed.

One project is the transfer of the 110-megawatt Pinamucan diesel-fired generator complex from Batangas to Iloilo, which will help address the threat of a power shortage in Panay island.

Another is drawing up of contingency measures to cushion the effects of the anticipated El Niño phenomenon on the supply of electricity.

Murga has secured Malacañang's nod on his retirement by the end of this year at the height of a renewed dip in Napocor's public image due to rising power rates.

The former construction firm executive will finally retire at the end of March next year.

Energy Undersecretary Cyril del Callar, who has been in charge of matters related to the power industry, will take Murga's place.

Del Callar first joined the DoE in 1995 as an assistant secretary, at a time when the first versions of proposed laws on a comprehensive reform of the power industry were introduced in Congress.

He became undersecretary in 1997 and was recently involved as overseer in the latest reorganization of Napocor.

Perez also announced that the appointments of Guillermo R. Balce and Peter Anthony A. Abaya had been confirmed.

Balce is the immediate past executive director of the Jakarta-based Asean Center for Energy, a post he held for 10 years from 1994.

Balce started his career as a geologist with Napocor in 1961. He also served as chief geologist of the Philippine Bureau of Mines, director of the Mines Geosciences Bureau, and energy assistant secretary from 1995 to 1998.

Abaya was undersecretary at the Office of the President's Priority Programs and Official Development. Assistance Projects.

Balce will handle matters concerning the upstream sector of the oil and gas industry while Abaya will take care of the downstream sector.

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From page B1

the upscale Pacific Plaza Towers.

The report said Metrobank had been considering a way for Metro Pacific to settle its P2.4-billion debt. It wasn't immediately clear what led Metrobank to instead file for foreclose on the real estate mortgage, the report said.

In other bad news, a survey showed Philippine and foreign business executives were unhappy with President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. Survey participants believed she hadn't done enough to push fiscal reforms, combat corruption or attract new investments, according to the Business Opinion Survey report.

Traders said investors are also worried violence may erupt during the funeral Wednesday of popular movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. Poe, who died of a stroke last week, was the opposition runner-up in the May election and was immensely popular among the poor. *AP*

Hugs and crisis

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

HOW time flies! In the past few months, my 21-year-old son, fresh from college, has been looking for a job, which is never an easy task.

Only a few seconds ago, he was just this little boy who thought that "being cool," was pouring soft drinks on freshly cooked pizza, and serving everything only to me. All of a sudden, he has joined the ranks of millions of unemployed.

Okay, according to the recent spin of this cute administration of Gloriaetta, saying it with lots of hugs and kisses to those in poor areas, the jobless are down to only three million plus lately.

In other words, the spin doctors of this cute administration were telling us that things were finally looking up in the economy. Look, ma, we had less jobless!

They in government can believe what they want. I just don't know if they can fool all those hundreds of thousands of young people who are still looking for work.

* * *

ALL right, granted this cute administration single-handedly and instantaneously solved the fiscal crisis by simply announcing in media that, without its even lifting a dirty finger, the crisis was over.

But just because Gloriaetta was proud to announce that the crisis was over, it did not necessarily mean she was telling us the truth. Just look at her track record. This is the same woman who said one thing and did another, remember?

Only the "sin" taxes have passed Congress. Still pending is a long list of other tax measures. At the same time, Gloriaetta is under attack for supposedly "talking" to business people on the tax measures which may affect their companies.

By implication, people perhaps thought that those up there were secretly fixing the tax measures to favor certain business sectors. One of them was, of course, the telco industry.

But really now, Gloriaetta just had to talk to the business people to win them to her side. If she does not, they will just fight the new taxes. If she does not hug them at least, her fantastic declaration that the crisis was over, well, will remain just that—a declaration.

* * *

ONE of the tax measures, as proposed by the Department of Finance, was the franchise tax on the telco sector.

Sure, why not? The tax will raise another P10 billion for this cute administration, which is staring at a budget deficit of more than P200 billion this year. All right, with the telco franchise tax, there would only be P190 billion more to go! Way to go!

Before you can guess who actually will pay for the so-called franchise taxes on telco (hint: not the business owners), let me tell you the reason why Finance was in hot pursuit of the telco industry.

Simply put, two or three telco companies are making money. Actually, they are raking it in. In this country, therefore, if you are successful in business, and you make huge profits, Finance will punish you with taxes.

It is the same as telling the prospective investors that we don't look kindly on them if they make money here. Why the freak will they invest here? Beats me too!

* * *

WHY do we want to kill a sector which is doing well? I don't have the answer. Maybe we are just out of our minds.

Look, even without new taxes, those two or three telco companies will remit more taxes to the government, at the rate of about 40 percent more—every year.

That's the natural growth rate of the industry, and it is growing fast, because we are still playing catch-up with the rest of the world.

The problem is, only a couple of telco companies are raking it in. All the small companies in the provinces are hard up. With the franchise tax, this cute administration will tax even all those struggling telco firms, whether or not they make money.

How do you develop the telco infrastructure in other parts of the country? Simple—you don't!

* * *

FOR that matter, the entire telco industry must invest a fortune on new equipment. This is the reason we are having good telecommunications service of all sorts. Finally!

It seems like only minutes ago when we would kill in order to hear the dial tone on our landlines.

Telco services improve by leaps and bounds, precisely because the telco sector invests heavily on equipment.

For the sector to become competitive in the ever demanding world market, the government even gave the telco companies some tax breaks for their investments.

Know what? Their happy tax holidays already expired early this year. Meaning, they must pay more taxes for their new purchase of equipment.

And they will have to invest everything up to their last underwear on new equipment in coming years. This means more taxes for the government.

And those, ladies and gentlemen, are the same taxes which we will lose if, by imposing the wrong taxes, we kill the same telco sector today.

* * *

FOR example, even with the tax holidays, the telco companies are paying value added tax, or VAT, for their equipment importation.

Not only that, they pay the VAT in advance. You see, by definition, the VAT is paid for at the point of sale—like when you buy a gift for your mother in law.

But the telco companies pay for VAT as soon as the equipment goes through customs. It is an advance payment.

This year alone, one telco company is said to have paid some P4 billion in VAT for equipment importation alone.

What I am saying here is, there are other ways to skin the telco companies other than making all of them pay a franchise tax, whether they make money or not.

And that's probably the reason why other telco companies are pressing for a higher VAT instead of the franchise tax. The VAT is simply the more sober measure!

* * *

BASED on calculations in Congress, a mere two percentage point increase in the VAT will yield some P30 billion a year.

All right, with a P200-billion plus deficit, that's P170 billion in new taxes more to go. But still, that white paper from UP, for instance, bats for VAT, because it is the fairer measure. It does not single out a particular business sector.

Of course, the VAT is hard to understand. It has been a puzzle to most of us laymen since its first public appearance here in 1988.

Now if we do not understand the VAT, what more can we expect from our beloved lawmakers?

I mean, sure, the legislature passes all the tax measures. This is just not the same as the lawmakers' understanding the measures they pass.

* * *

FOR instance, one of the more serious young senators was batting for an exemption of the new tax measures from the IRA.

That's the "internal revenue allotment," the 40 percent share of local government units from tax measures passed by Congress.

Now, the new tax measures in Congress are intended to address the fiscal crisis, period.

Anyway, local government units are going to get higher IRAs, even from the normal yearly increase in the tax take of the national government.

One senator objected to the proposal strongly. Why? He apparently authored the local government code.

But look, boss, even local government officials are already happy with the normal increase in their IRAs. Even they understand the meaning of the word "crisis."

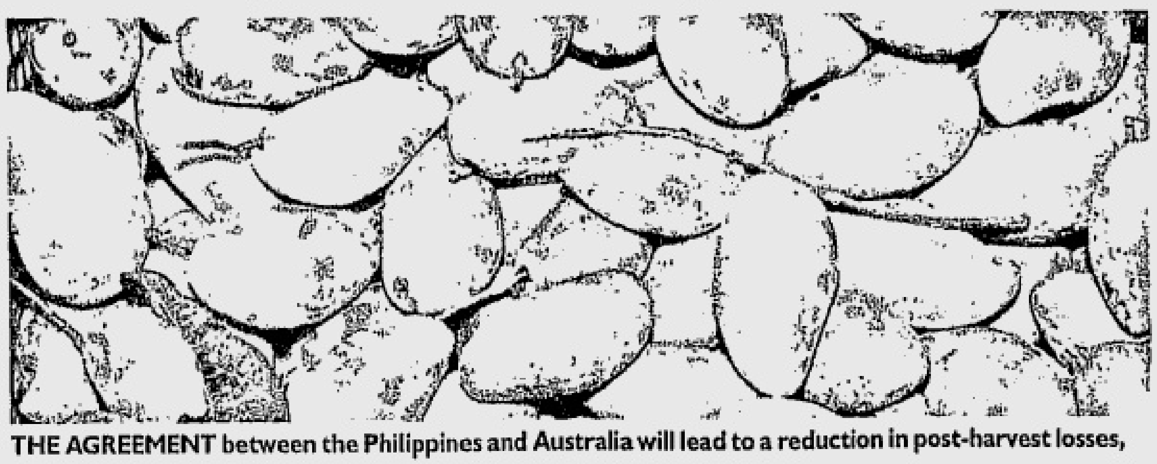
Australia helps RP improve mango production

DAVAO CITY—The Philippine and Australian governments recently signed an agreement that would help local farmers boost their mango production.

Australian Ambassador Ruth Pearce and Patricio Faylon, executive director of the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD), signed the agreement last week, according to a statement from the Australian Embassy in Manila.

The project, dubbed as the "Management of Post-harvest Diseases of Subtropical and Tropical Fruits Using their Natural Resistance Mechanism," is funded by a P6.3-million grant from the Australian government.

The project is aimed at reducing post-harvest losses caused by diseases, from 30 percent to 3 percent.



THE AGREEMENT between the Philippines and Australia will lead to a reduction in post-harvest losses, from 30 percent to 3 percent.

The statement said the project "will assess the treatments which enhance host resistance and reduce disease losses in mango; foster improvements to farm and post-harvest management of disease; and enhance the capacity of project participants in the Philippines and Australia to conduct plant disease research."

The Philippines is the world's fifth largest producer of mango, with over 800,000 tons of the fruit harvested each year.

Ambassador Pearce said Australia was eager to add to its support for agricultural research in the Philippines to increase the country's agricultural productivity, thus, contributing to poverty reduction efforts.

The approach to be used for the projects is mainly based on the findings of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (Aciar).

The research body worked on a mango production facility in Sri Lanka.

Aciar is the Australian government's arm for its international aid program on agriculture.

Aciar Philippines Country Manager Cecilia Honrado reported that in both the Philippines and Australia, sustainable development of the mango industry was hampered by pest and disease losses, variable productivity, perishability of the fruit, supply-chain deficiencies, and market access challenges. *Dennis Jay C. Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Firm puts up foundation for local folk

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The AJMR Group of Companies (formerly AMS Group of Companies) has put up an educational foundation to help improve the lot of indigenous Filipinos in T'boli town, South Cotabato.

Jun Ledesma, head of AJMR Corporate and media affairs department, told the INQUIRER that the move was a result of one of the visits of AJMR president Alberto Soriano to the plantation site.

Soriano found out that elementary graduates could not proceed to high school due to the absence of a secondary school in the area.

Thus, the foundation was organized last September to offer free secondary education to poor T'boli students.

The free education program would start in June next year and will initially use existing elementary school buildings.

"Classes will be conducted at night (as elementary students will use the classrooms during the day)," Ledesma said.

But he said that if the present number of classrooms is not enough to accommodate enrollees in high school, AJMR will finance the construction of additional school buildings.

School facilities like books, laboratory facilities and computers, among others, will likewise be provided by the company.

AJMR, mother company of Upland Banana Corp., which is engaged in banana cultivation in T'boli town, is investing P45 million in the area. *Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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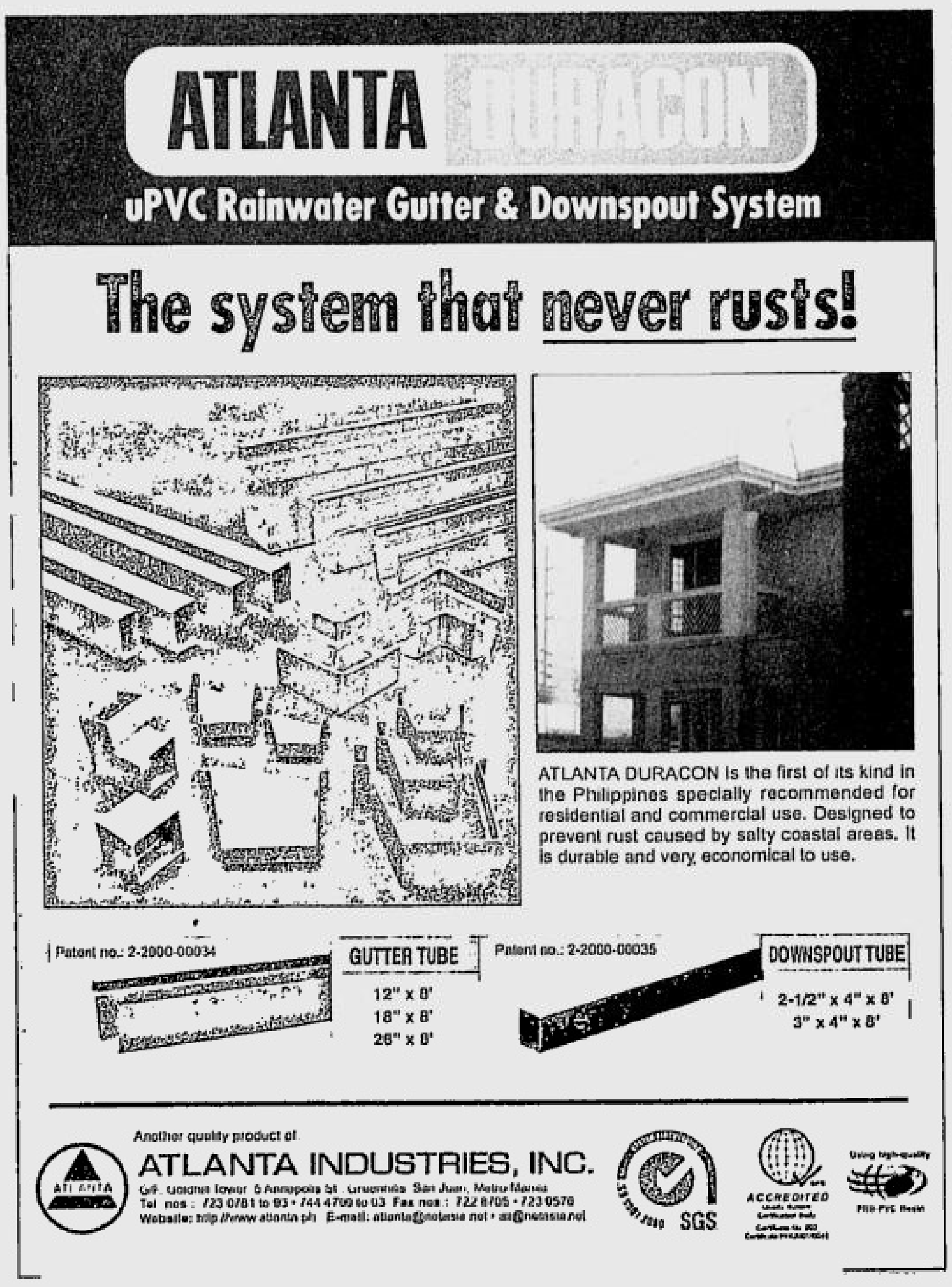

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Bearbull Thais up his vacation

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

IF YOU are feeling depressed or having mood swings, go and see Bipolar Express with Tom Hanks. It takes you to the Pole, where the President has been downgraded to negative, along with the outlook for the Philippines. Try to avoid the Carpal Tunnel. In the stores, there is one Santa Claus and a lot of subordinate clauses.

I spent the past week frantically trying to book a holiday because the only time I can go away is Christmas to New Year as I am married to the newsletter. One travel agency succeeded but wanted to charge me the full amount for my daughter. I know very well that she gets a 25-percent discount on the airfare and we do not have to pay for her, especially as she is sharing our bed.

Another agency booked us at a much cheaper rate but we were wait-listed on the return. And my wife was weight listed at 70 kg. In desperation, I decided to take our vacation in this country—Boracay was fully booked so I wrote to a good hotel in Cebu. Their rate was $220++, without breakfast and an extra $40 for my daughter. Adding on the fares, this came to nearly $3000 for 8 days/7 nights.

In desperation, I rang a small travel agency, which advertised in the Sunday newspaper and in one hour, I had confirmed a two-center holiday in Thailand by Thai Airways, staying in 4-star hotels. This included a private beach, breakfast, transfers in Bangkok and transport to and from the seaside resort, a Bangkok City tour and a trip to an elephant village. The cost was slightly over half. No wonder Thailand has 12 million tourists a year and, excluding *balikbayans*, we have 1 million plus.

I found a letter that my little one had written to Santa Claus, but it was not what I expected. She wrote, "Dear Santa, my Daddy wants as a gift a new toe because it is hurting. I would like anything. I am sure you will send a very good toe that works properly on Christmas." She addressed it to the North Pole. Isn't that sweet?

There has been a lot of publicity given to the adverse effects of putting a laptop on your lap. It heats up a vital portion of your anatomy and reduces your sperm count dramatically. The same effect is obtained by carrying a live cell phone in your pocket but it takes longer. As we suffer from overpopulation, why not make it compulsory for all men to use these appliances in addition to the rhythm method. Bird flu can attack anyone but the Monica Lewinsky virus only attacks laptops. The government is planning a sex tax based on men's vital statistics. I am really worried because in my younger days, I was the model for Smokey's foot -long sausage.

***

THERE is not much to write about the stock market because turnover is diminishing and, apart from cross sales and last minute selective window dressing, nothing exciting is likely to happen this week. Still, I called the rally last Tuesday absolutely spot on for the 12th time in succession. I wrote to subscribers and readers that the indicator was so low that a rally was imminent.

Actually, the indicator was below 1, which is very rarely seen so I felt certain of the timing. I wrote the article on Monday and on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, the PHISIX gapped up 73 points before succumbing to a weekend profit-taking. TEL, which was at zero risk, rose over P100 before retracing some of the rise. I have never seen in any technical analysis book any indicator that can perform anywhere near as well as this one.

I was disappointed that the Senate passed only one bill before going into recess. They inserted a Santa clause into the sin tax bill raising the amount to P15 billion but I doubt whether that will suffice. For sure they will pass another two or three measures as soon as they return, otherwise we will be downgraded. That will be very costly because the government needs to raise $4 billion early next year before the FED increases its rates again, probably in February.

The cost of borrowing depends on two factors. The first is the yield on the comparable US Treasury stock and the second is the spread, which is a reflection of the risk in buying junk bonds. Any downgrade will increase the spread and as we have so much foreign debt ($66 billion), it will leave less money for infrastructure, health, education, etc. So it must be avoided at all costs.

The gold sector has been disappointing but 50 invitations have been sent to Australia, Canada and other countries inviting foreign companies to develop our dormant or undeveloped mines. If there is really $800 billion to $1 trillion worth of gold in the ground, I am sure there will be a good response, especially with gold at a 16-year high. If the dollar continues to decline as is likely, we could see gold at $500 an ounce. So we must seize this opportunity.

Of course, this will cause environmental problems in the areas mined, and the companies must instigate all measures to minimize this. If people need to be moved, they must be given alternative accommodation and recompensed. A spokesperson said that this would take at least two years for the government to decide. The foreign companies will not wait that long and will invest in Russia, which has far more gold than we have, or in South Africa, which has been a major producer for decades.

It is inconceivable that the government will let this opportunity slip away, particularly as we have a record number of people unemployed or underemployed, and about one-third of the population lives below the poverty level. So I expect some bids for selected gold mines in the next few months and this will send the mining index soaring. It is probably better to buy the 'B' shares as these are the only category that foreigners can buy. This means LCB, PXB, MAB and Jollibee.

There will not be any article on Dec. 28 because I will be away on vacation and probably so will you, so my next article will be on Jan. 4. I am going to laze on the beach for 6 days, as I cannot walk far, so when I return, I will probably be black. But color doesn't matter. It's all a pigment of the imagination.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

Net 'hot money' inflow should hit $3B yearly, says BSP chief

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the Philippines should generate as much as $3 billion in yearly net portfolio inflows, or about four times of the level it was getting now.

Buenaventura said the country's current share in the total portfolio inflow to the region was too small compared with those of the other Asian countries.

He admitted, however, that the country needed to step up the pace of reforms to develop the capital markets to attract more investors.

Also, he said the government's fiscal consolidation should prevent further debt rating downgrades by international credit rating agencies, which could further drive away foreign investors.

In 2003, the country generated only $675.8 million in net portfolio inflows. The figure has not improved much this year, with the inflows reaching only $626.9 million in the first 11 months.

Portfolio inflows refer to non-resident investments in peso bank deposits, government securities/money market instruments and securities listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange.

The Institute of International Finance (IIF) has estimated that the net private capital inflows to the five countries in East Asia most affected by the 1997 financial crisis—Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand—would likely reach a post-crisis high of $33 billion in 2004 after quadrupling to $25.4 billion in 2003.

This reflects a strong global growth, an increase in risk appetite among investors, low interest rates and strong economic fundamentals in the region. With slower global growth and the rise, albeit measured, of interest rates in 2005, net private capital flows to the five crisis-affected countries are likely to decline across the board to $24 billion in 2005, according to the IIF forecast.

It said all major components, except net portfolio equity inflows, were likely to have increased this year. Credit from commercial banks and other private lenders were expected to be the main contributors to the increase.

"The Philippines and Thailand, which made net repayments to commercial banks in 2003, are expected to register net inflows this year. Net non-bank capital inflows are also estimated to increase sharply," the IIF said.

With most bond spreads stable or tighter in the region, the issuance by both the corporations and the government have been large. Four Korean companies issued bonds worth more than $500 million each while the Korean government issued sovereign bonds in September.

It noted that the Philippines likewise continued to borrow heavily from international capital markets for deficit financing.

Generally, the region's stock markets have rebounded sharply in recent months. Thus far, the performance of stock prices (in local currency terms) in 2004 ranged from a 15 percent decline in Thailand to a 40 percent increase in Indonesia, with the stock markets in the Philippines increasing by a strong 24 percent.

Besides global and regional factors, the peaceful conclusion of elections in Indonesia and the Philippines likely contributed to their improved stock market performance, the IIF said.

Subic-Clark toll road plan seen pushing through as scheduled

ANGELES CITY—Presidential adviser for the Subic-Clark Growth Alliance said the implementation of the P21-billion Subic-Clark-Tarlac toll road project was expected to push through without any hitch.

"I'm optimistic because it's mostly procedural matter and we have not heard any negative reactions from the local representatives of the JBIC (Japan Bank for International Cooperation)," said Licuanan, in reaction to reports that the JBIC, the funding agency, was rethinking its commitment.

Licuanan, also chair of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, said "nothing was unusual" about the JBIC review of the financial viability and funding capability of the Bases Conversion Development Authority as a borrower.

"It's a matter of procedure," he said.

About 85 percent of the road project cost will be financed through a 41.9-billion yen loan. JBIC, according to reports, held its approval for the project because it wanted to first get an assurance that it would not pay for construction-related taxes and duties worth P2.3 billion.

The 94.5-km road will connect the two military bases-turned-economic zones. While managed by separate state-owned corporations, Subic in Zambales and Clark in Pampanga possess infrastructure network that, when connected, could strengthen the potentials for growth of Central Luzon.

Under the 10-point program of the Arroyo administration, Subic and Clark are envisioned as leading logistics, transport and warehouse hub in Southeast Asia. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Rural bank plans IPO in '05

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange (PSE) is courting a leading rural bank in Luzon to list on the big board of the local bourse.

PSE president Francis E. Lim said in a briefing yesterday that if the rural bank pushes through with its plan, it will qualify under the first board of the PSE, which is limited to companies with assets worth at least P500 million.

He declined to name the bank, but said it was the most outstanding rural bank in 2003.

The bank is also in talks with a foreign investor, which will inject roughly $3 million in fresh capital.

The bank runs more than 30 branches nationwide and is in the process of expanding its network.

The bank plans to offer part of its shares to the public by the first half of next year.

In another development, Lim said the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has directed the PSE's Market Regulatory Office (MRO) to investigate possible insider trading involving Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

"We don't know the facts yet. We don't want to preempt anything but there are allegations of insider trading. The SEC has requested PSE's MRO to thoroughly investigate it for the interest of the public," Lim said.

The bank's trades are being checked for possible insider trading after SM Investments Corp., the private company of the SM Group of mall magnate Henry Sy Sr. and the controlling shareholder of the bank, allegedly sold shares in BDO after BDO's nine-month profit statement was disclosed, sources said earlier.

BDO reported late October that its nine-month profit soared 41 percent to P1.36 billion, from P965.2 million in the same period last year.

Gov't seen gaining . . .

From page B1

firms," Lotilla said.

He explained that several law firms had advised prospective foreign bidders to put up corporations for the special purpose of bidding "in order to preclude even the remotest possibility of the Supreme Court decision in the Manila Hotel case being invoked against them."

Lotilla was referring to the High Court's ruling that gave right to a local firm to match the price offered by the highest bidder that was a foreign corporation.

"PSALM's financial adviser, Credit Suisse First Boston, has further explained that it is typical for bidders in any privatization throughout the world to bring in their capital once they have won a bid," he said.

East Asia . . .

From page B1

sis—Thailand, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia and the Philippines—were set to reach a post-crisis high of $33 billion this year after quadrupling to $25.4 billion in 2003.

"This reflects strong global growth, an increase in risk appetite among investors, low interest rates, and strong economic fundamentals in the region," the bank said. *Reuters*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 20, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3	3	3	3	200,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	25	27	25	27	2,240,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	51.5	52	51	51.5	1,745,500
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	48	48	47	47	296,100
International Exch. Bank	16.75	17	16.75	16.75	51,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	27	27.5	25.5	26	595,300
Philippine National Bank	22.75	22.75	22.75	22.75	5,000
Phil. Savings Bank	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	200
Union Bank of the Phil.	23.25	23.5	23.25	23.25	19,700
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2490	2490	2490	2490	150
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	112	112	112	112	240
Sun Life FinancialInc.	1790	1790	1790	1790	170
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	18.25	18.25	18.25	18.25	10,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.68	1.7	1.64	1.7	5,957,000
Globe TelecomInc.	940	940	930	935	22,500
Ipeopleinc.	2.75	2.85	2.7	2.85	48,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033	200,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	80,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.28	2.28	2.28	2.28	1,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.5	2.5	2.46	2.46	1,782,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1290	1290	1275	1280	40,530
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	29,700,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	16	16	15.75	16	56,800
Manila Electric Co. B	25	25.5	24.75	24.75	265,400
Petron Corp.	3.2	3.25	3.15	3.15	2,335,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	10,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	29,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.8	113,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.18	1.2	1.18	1.2	4,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	470,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	10,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63	10,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	60,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.98	1.98	1.94	1.96	3,865,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31.5	31.5	31	31	87,700
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28	28	28	28	58,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57	57.5	57	57.5	65,400
San Miguel Corp. B	76	76	75	75.5	225,100
Universal Robina Corp.	9.3	9.6	9.3	9.6	2,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	250,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	12,000,000
Ayala Corp.	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.7	8,066,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	4,045,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	500,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	6,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	20,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	1,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.68	0.68	0.67	0.67	10,760,000
Dmci Holdings Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.75	3.8	353,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	4.65	4.65	4.55	4.6	262,000
F&J Prince Holdings Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	10,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	30.5	30.5	30	30	956,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	200,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	2,300,000
Keppel Holdings B	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	46,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.12	2.22	2.1	2.1	1,337,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	2,500,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.22	1.22	350,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	10,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.33	0.35	86,830,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	400,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	70,000
South China Resources Inc	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.33	390,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	1,200,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	10,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	5,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Bello Corp.	0.61	0.62	0.61	0.62	830,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.08	1.08	2,436,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.58	0.58	160,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.28	0.34	0.28	0.28	3,290,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-Cbn Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	18.25	18.5	18.25	18.5	1,347,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	2,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,500
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	2,100
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	7.9	8.4	7.9	8	188,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7	7	6.8	6.9	10,979,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	660,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.145	0.145	0.135	0.135	1,800,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	6,380,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.12	1.12	1.1	1.1	6,018,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	500,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	600,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.4	69,000
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	320,000
SM Prime HoldingsInc.	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	11,299,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.35	0.37	0.35	0.37	300,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	10,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	139,100,000
Atlas Cons. Min. & Dev't	3.75	3.8	3.75	3.8	19,000
Benguet Corp. A	3	3.25	3	3.25	31,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3.4	3.5	3.3	3.4	156,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.25	0.27	0.25	0.27	15,120,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.35	0.37	0.34	0.36	12,440,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.017	0.018	0.017	0.017	434,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.026	0.026	0.025	0.026	19,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.0048	0.0048	0.0046	0.0046	106,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.59	0.66	0.59	0.65	7,880,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.67	0.69	0.67	0.69	6,640,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	100,000
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	15,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	29,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	200,000

DISCLOSURES

ELECTED directors of **BHI Holdings Inc.** were Manuel Tanklansee, Juanita Tan, Romulo Sigua, Jemie Tan, Marilou Pua, Nemesio Ang, Jalane Christie Tan, Brigido Dulay Jr., Miguel Ocampo Tan, Emma Keng Ocampo-Tan and Rudin Gonzalez.

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ABOITIZ Transport System Corp. confirmed that the Board of Investment (BOI) approved their application for registration under inter-island shipping operation for the modernization and upgrade of Superferry 19 (formerly Superferry 8). Once registered, the company is entitled to income tax holiday for a period of three years.

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THE BOARD of directors of **Philippine National Construction Corp.** elected Enrique Cuejilo Jr. as member of the board. Cuejilo was assigned 50 shares.

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BOULEVARD Holdings Inc. accepted the resignation of Emmanuel Lopez-Dee as director and Sabino Acut as corporate secretary of the company. The board elected John Deveras and Dennis Manicad to replace them.

***

THE BOARD of directors of **Export and Industry Bank Inc.** approved the distribution of P47 million from cash collections from the assets pool of Urban Bank Inc. (UBI) and Urbancorp Investments Inc. (UII) as additional interest recoveries of UBI/UII depositors and creditors. ***Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

December 20, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.751201923	1.000000	56.2570
Japan	Yen	0.007212	0.009600	0.5401
United Kingdom	Pound	1.458984	1.942200	109.2623
Hongkong	Dollar	0.09656	0.128541	7.2313
Switzerland	Franc	0.649548	0.864678	48.6442
Canada	Dollar	0.612027	0.814730	45.8343
Singapore	Dollar	0.456658	0.607903	34.1988
Australia	Dollar	0.570518	0.759474	42.7257
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.992843	2.652872	149.2426
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.200342	0.266695	15.0035
Brunei	Dollar	0.455274	0.606061	34.0952
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000081	0.000108	0.0061
Thailand	Baht	0.019163	0.025510	1.4351
UAE	Dirham	0.204537	0.272279	15.3176
Euro	Euro	1	1.331200	74.8893
Argentina	Peso	0.25187	0.335289	18.8624
Brazil	REAL	0.276839	0.368528	20.7323
Denmark	Kroner	0.134559	0.179125	10.0770
India	Rupee	0.017119	0.022789	1.2820
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.197711	0.263193	14.8064
Mexico	New Peso	0.066958	0.089135	5.0145
New Zealand	Dollar	0.535388	0.712708	40.0946
Norway	Kroner	0.121727	0.162043	9.1161
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012593	0.016764	0.9431
South Africa	Rand	0.130528	0.173759	9.7752
Korea	Won	0.000708	0.000943	0.0531
Sweden	Kroner	0.111435	0.148342	8.3453
Syria	Pound	0.014471	0.019264	1.0837
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023221	0.030912	1.7390
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000392	0.000522	0.0294

People, Events & Products

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Editor Aries Espinosa

Filipinos warned on fake drugs

THE COALITION Against Fake Medicines warned the public anew that the use of counterfeit drugs, especially those for the treatment of malaria, tuberculosis, and pneumonia, could easily lead to death. The warning was issued in the wake of recent NBI raids and arrests of several drugstore owners for selling fake medicines.

The coalition revealed that even vitamins and the most common medicines for cough, cold, and flu have found their way to the shelves of small drugstores via the Philippine backdoor in Mindanao. Some capsules and contraceptive pills have also been found to be made of flour, and children's paracetamol syrups have been mixed with industrial solvent, and vaccines with tap water. In fact, there are many sources of these drugs and many of them have yet to be verified. As of now, the coalition only knows that some of these fake medicines come from India, Malaysia, Indonesia, China, and Pakistan.

DOH Secretary Manuel Dayrit tagged these counterfeiters as "mass murderers for money" and has called on the public to support the government and the coalition's campaign to stop the proliferation of these useless and deadly medicines in the country.

Although experts say that medicine counterfeiting is largely a cottage industry that takes place in people's backyards rather than in large warehouses, the coalition believes that it is linked to organized crime, corruption, the narcotics trade, unregulated pharmaceutical companies and the business interests of "unscrupulous" politicians here and around the world.

The coalition believes that Filipinos, especially the poor, are searching for inexpensive alternatives. But fake medicines are not the answer. Filipino families deserve more than that. That is why the coalition is not only providing information regarding this grave health issue besetting our country. It is currently working in collaboration with the Bureau of Customs, the National Bureau of Investigation, the pharmaceutical industry, professional healthcare associations, consumer associations and non-governmental organizations in the surveillance of companies or groups suspected of drug counterfeiting. But the work cannot be done by the coalition alone. It needs all the help it can get. For example, drugstores can do their share by selling only legitimate medicines. Government agencies can strictly enforce the law, specifically Republic Act 8203 or The Special Law on Counterfeit Drugs. Legislators, on the other hand, can further tighten the laws on counterfeits.

The Coalition Against Fake Medicines is composed of 10 organizations, namely the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Justice (DOJ), Philippine Medical Association (PMA), Drugstores Association of the Philippines (DSAP), Mercury Drug Corp, Zuellig Pharma Corp, GMA 7 Broadcast Network, Philippine Daily Inquirer and Pfizer Inc.

The coalition encourages every Filipino to report any information on counterfeit medicines to 1-800-10-FAKEMED (3253-633), toll free from anywhere in the Philippines.

ABENSON NOW BIGGER

It was a busy week for the Abenson team as the appliance retail giant opened two new stores. Recently, Abenson opened a store at Market!Market! in booming Fort Bonifacio Global City and in Angeles, Pampanga, its 4th showroom in the province. With the opening of two new stores, Abenson stays consistent with its proposition: value appliance shopping within the neighborhood. Shown is Fernando Zobel de Ayala, Ayala Land chair, gracing Abenson's Market!Market! branch opening Sept. 16. Joining the ribbon-cutting ceremonies were Ayala Land Corp president Jimmy Ayala (2nd from left) and vice president Miriam Katigbak (left).

DOLE resolves BPI CBA

IN A memorandum dated Dec. 9, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) ordered a wage increase of P1,125 on the fourth year and another P1,125 on the fifth year for all employees.

DOLE also authorized implementation of P5,000 one-time pay for the employees and additional allowance for overtime, meal and transportation, and medical-related allowances as well as cost of living allowances (Cola).

The union president and other union officers are allowed 30 days leave for the purpose of attending trade union activities.

As the DOLE memorandum provides, the benefits are retroactive to April 1, 2004 for members of BPI Metro Manila Union, Federation of Unions in BPI Unibank (Fubu), and BPI Employees Union-ALU-TUCP. For members of Fubu Davao Chapter, the effectivity of the benefits is Oct. 1, 2004.

BPI and the appropriate unions are to incorporate the benefits in their respective collective bargaining agreements.

SMC, QUEDANCOR, ASSEMBLER
BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP
Signing

SMC-QUEDANCOR SIGN MOA

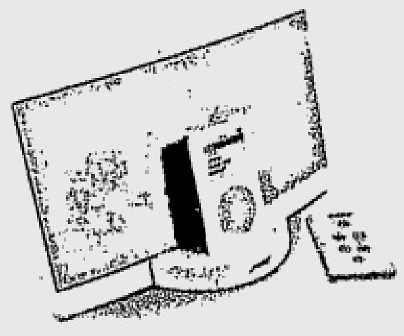
San Miguel Corp and Quedancor recently signed a memorandum of agreement making low-cost financing available to assemblers in Luzon. The program, which was also introduced in Davao, will allow assemblers to fund the raw material sourcing project, one of the primary components of the SMC Integrated Agro-Industrial Zone (IAIZ). It is seen not only as the driver for countryside development and the agriculture sector's regional competitiveness but also as a dollar-saving mechanism. Miraya Corp is the first assembler in Luzon to sign up for the program. Present during the signing are (seated, from left) Nelson C. Buenaflor, president and CEO of Quedancor, Wilfredo Penaflor, president of Miraya Corp, Arthur O. Juan, IAIZ team leader, Leopoldo S. Titular, AVP and manager of SMC agribusiness development and operations group. Standing, from left, are Ed A. Aller, Luzon manager of SMC agribusiness development and operations group, Niels Patrick C. Riconalla, SVP for loans management of Quedancor, Michael Millares, SVP for legal management of Quedancor, Alberto Guevara, VP for credit guarantee of Quedancor, Leticia E. Santos, SVP for finance management of Quedancor, Emerito T. Alejo, VP of San Miguel Foods Inc-feeds division, and Evangeline H. Zarate, finance manager for San Miguel Foods Inc-feeds division.

AMBASSADOR AT ARTPETRON EXHIBIT

Petron Corp recently concluded its ArtPetron with an opening of an exhibit of this year's winning entries at the lobby of Petron Mega Plaza. The ribbon-cuting ceremony was led by Ambassador Mohammed Ameen Wali of Saudi Arabia (2nd from right). With him are Nicasio Alcantara, chair of Petron Corp, Abdulah Dimaporo, Representative of Lanao del Norte, Napoleon Abueva, national artist for visual arts and chair of the board of judges of ArtPetron 4 (painting), Lizzie Zobel de Ayala and Khalid Al-Faddagh, president and CEO of Petron Corp. This year's competition, themed 'Lumang Ani, Bagong Sali', collected from all regions of the country over 400 entries for painting and more than 100 entries for black and white photography, a new category introduced this year. All winning paintings will be featured in Petron's 2005 corporate wall calendar and winning photos will be printed on Petron's 2005 planners.

Product FILES

Digital music system from Bose



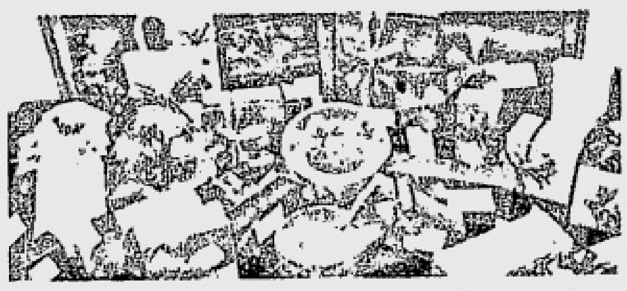
APPLE'S iPod portable music player has changed the way people listen to music. Millions of iPod owners worldwide use their players to take music collections wherever they go, and industry observers expect over a million more consumers to buy iPods during the holiday season. But the iPod experience is usually a private one, confining music to headphones and computers. The rapid growth of the iPod creates a new opportunity for Bose-to meet the needs of iPod owners with the new SoundDock digital music system.

The SoundDock digital music system is a powered acoustic package with a remote control and an iPod docking cradle. Simply insert the iPod into the cradle and experience a new level in digital music. The SoundDock system's sleek appearance blends with the iPod and almost any décor. Its slim profile and small footprint allow placement in kitchens, bedrooms, offices and dorm rooms.

The SoundDock system's appearance complements its ease of use. An infrared remote control enables the user to control the system and the iPod from almost anywhere in the room. With the docking cradle, there's no need for special adapters or stereo cables and it also acts as a charger for your iPod. "The SoundDock system enhances the performance of the iPod. Music lovers will surely be impressed by the quality of sound provided by such a small package," states Wilson So, president and GM of Eleksis Marketing Corp, exclusive distributors of Bose entertainment systems.

The SoundDock is available in audio and appliance centers nationwide. For inquiries on how to experience a new level of Digital music, call 724-9566 or 898-2048, or log on to www.eleksis.com.

Festive gift ideas



ALMOST always a part of the Christmas festive table is the fruitcake, better known as the Christmas cake. For 25 years, no other fruitcake product can beat the famous Festival Cakes, the brand that produces the fruitcakes of the season in bulk.

Festival fruitcakes are made from real dates, raisins, walnuts and hazelnuts combined with a rich taste of premium brandy. Festival fruitcake is not only made out of all these imported ingredients. It is also a combination of imported and local ingredients such as local Magnolia Buttercup Premium Margarine with its sweet creamy butter-corn taste made from a blend of finest quality vegetable oil and imported California Sun Maid Raisins.

Festival Cakes is a year-round treat for every occasion. The fruitcake can be served with tea. Festival Cakes have a shelf life of two years, provided it is dry-sealed and kept in the freezer.

JOLLIBEE'S NOVENA TV COMMERCIAL BAGS AWARD

Jollibee's Novena TV commercial bagged another award this year. It recently won a gold in the Araw Values Awards and was hailed as the Best TV Ad. Shown are the executives of Jollibee and Jimenezbasic (from left): Joel Villamayor, Jollibee marketing manager; Trixie Aguinaldo, Jollibee assistant product manager; Carol Kison-Estacio, Jollibee marketing manager; Inez Reyes, Jollibee VP for marketing; Tats Cruz, Jimenezbasic account director; Tere Filipinia, Jimenezbasic senior executive officer ; Myles Endrina, Jimenezbasic account manager. Not in the picture is Jimenezbasic creative director, Lawin Bulatao.

The Rockwell Center Yule Fair

CHRISTMAS time is special and that's exactly what it is at the Rockwell Center. Everyone with a child's heart will experience what it's like to sit on Santa's lap with every visit from Dec 18, 2004 to Jan 2, 2005.

A special Christmas carousel, kiddie train, kiddie ferris wheel and shooting gallery provided by Q Power Station plus a whole set of inflatable playgrounds by Themes and Motifs redefines the Rockwell landscape. The Plaza Garden and the Plaza Strip are the Christmas centers of the metropolis in the next few weeks.

Catch weekday events like bubble shows and appearances by the Smart Kid mascot plus freebies like face painting and glitter tattooing for Smart Kid subscribers who present their mobile phone to the Smart booth. On weekends, the holiday spirit reaches a feverish pitch as balancing acts, balloon shows, acrobats and contortionists take center stage along with jolly old Santa Claus to meet and greet the kids. Movie screenings in Rockwell's new events venue The Rockwell Tent at the Plaza will feature beloved animated films like "Garfield" and "Shrek 2".

Completing the Christmas cast are Power Plant Mall tenants like Nacho Fast, Buy-the-Bucket, Nestle Ice Cream, Seattle's Best, Café Mediterranean, O Music, Via Mare and Dunkin Donuts providing the munchies along with booths overflowing with cotton candy, show cones, squid balls and barbecue.

Kiddie favorite Candy Corner adds a twist to the festivities with its special candy bag promo at the South Court of Power Plant Mall. For only P250, customers will be allowed to fill their candy bag to the brim with all the candy they want! Those who make a donation of a fully functioning toy to Bantay Bata will even be given a 10-percent discount. Kids can do fun stuff like henna, an on-the-spot caricaturist booth and "Get a pic with St. Nick" also at the South Court of the Mall.

And to complete the Christmas tradition, Rockwell presents special performances from groups like Da Capo, Soulful, Rod, Ria Villena and Dexter who will fill the air with Christmas tunes.

For further details call the Rockwell information center at 890-6888.

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Contact Persons: Fr. Francis Lucas or Mr. Sanny Jegillos (IRDC)
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Fax No.:563-7327
Email: sagipbuhay@yahoo.com

Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Sts.; Makati
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CASH DONATIONS may be deposited to:
Any Bank of Philippine Islands Branch-Account Name: Sagip-Buhay Infanta Fund; Account Number-3223-3882-35
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Fr. Lito Parulan/Fe Juana • Tel. Nos.: (44)463-3849, 463-0388, (0917)3272125 (Fe)

FOR OTHER INQUIRIES:

please contact Ms. Milet Mendoza, Assisi Development Foundation • tel. nos. 632-1001 to 03; (0917)8391237

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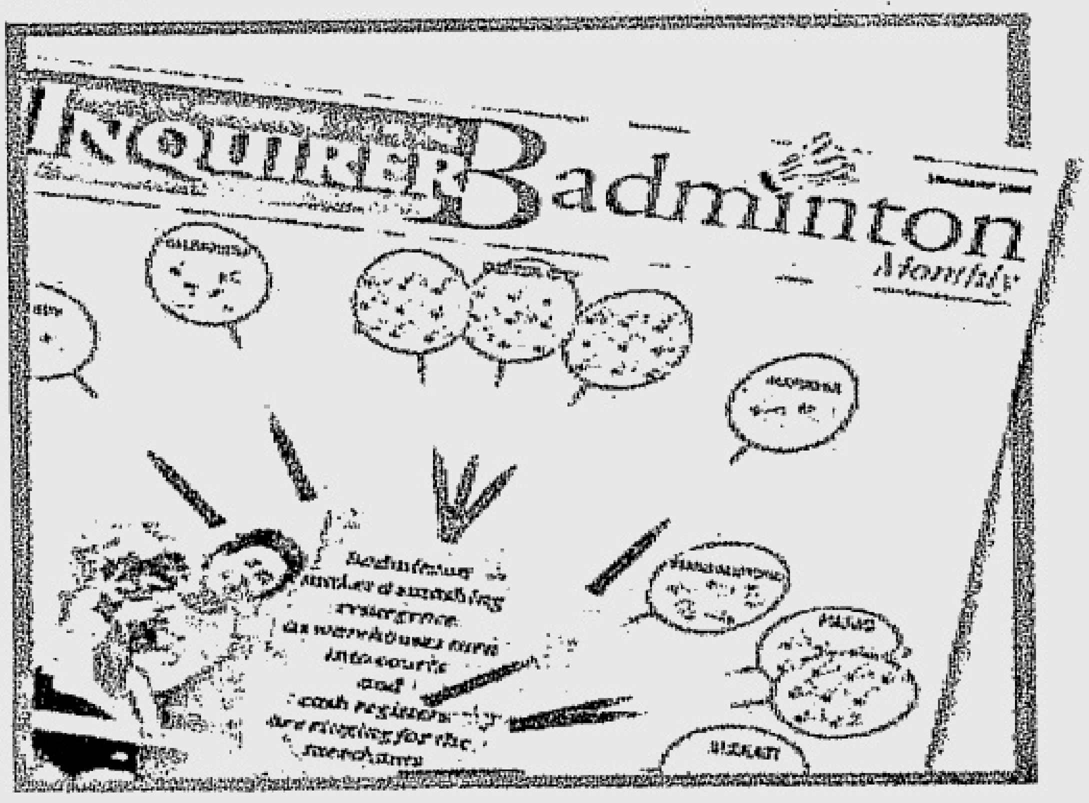
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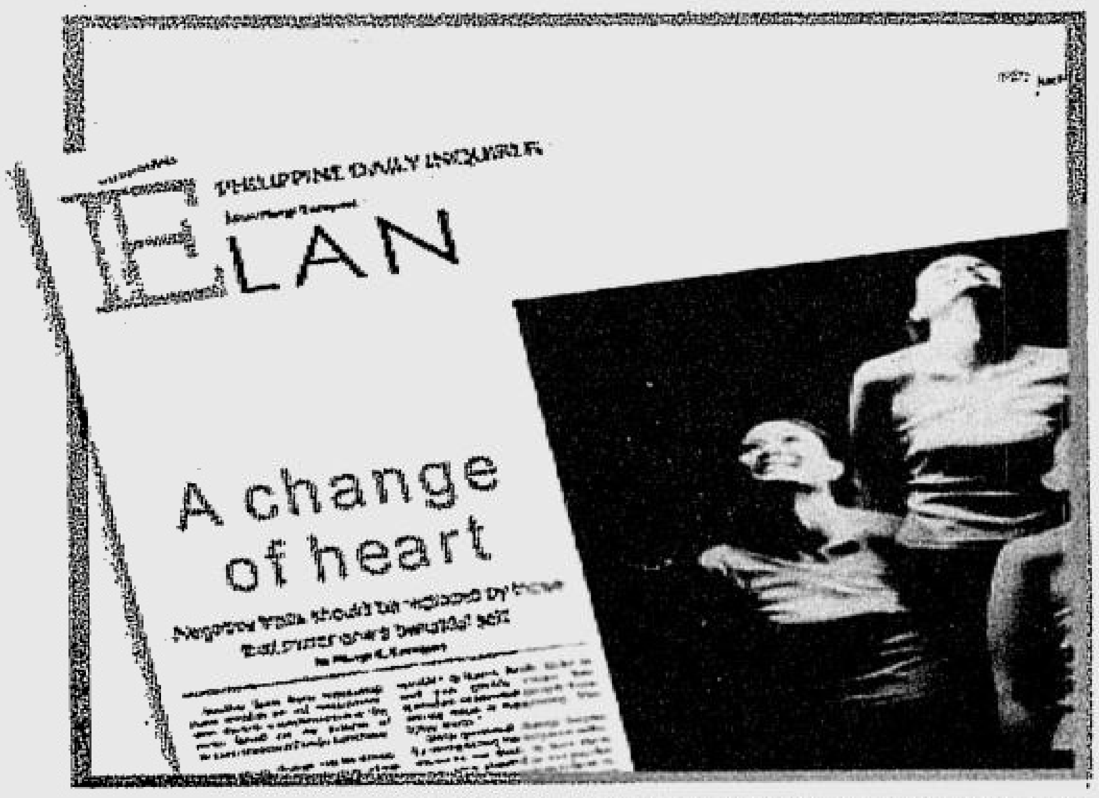
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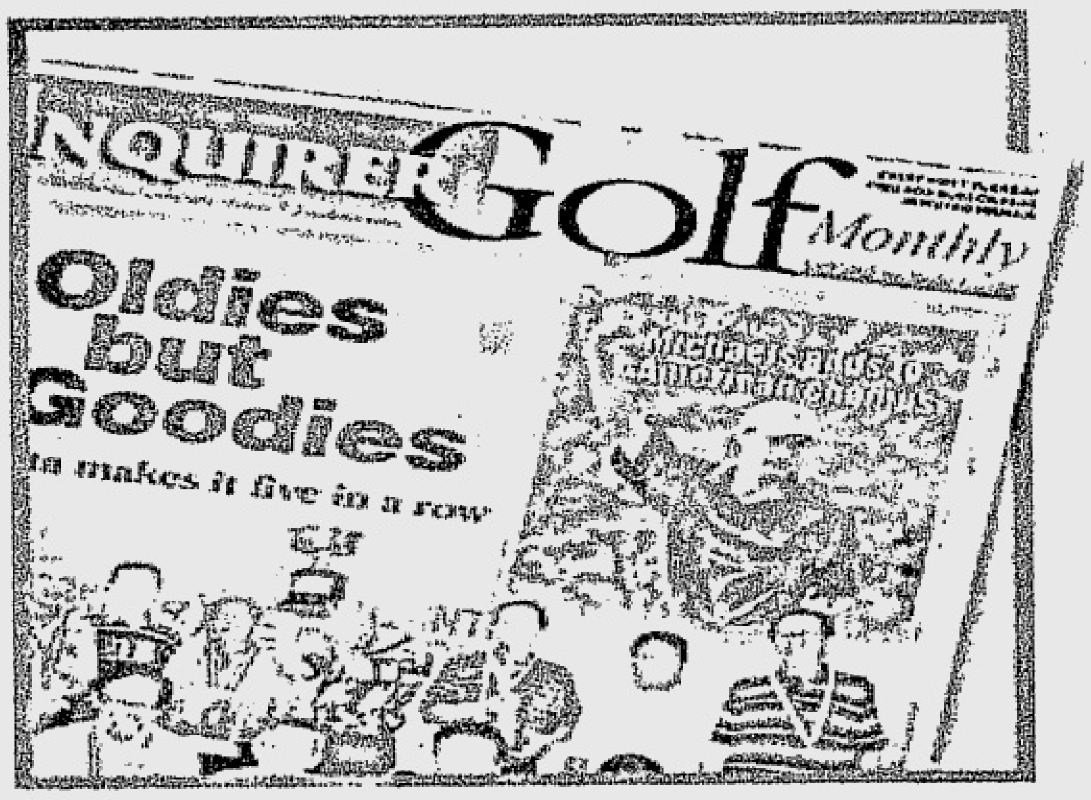
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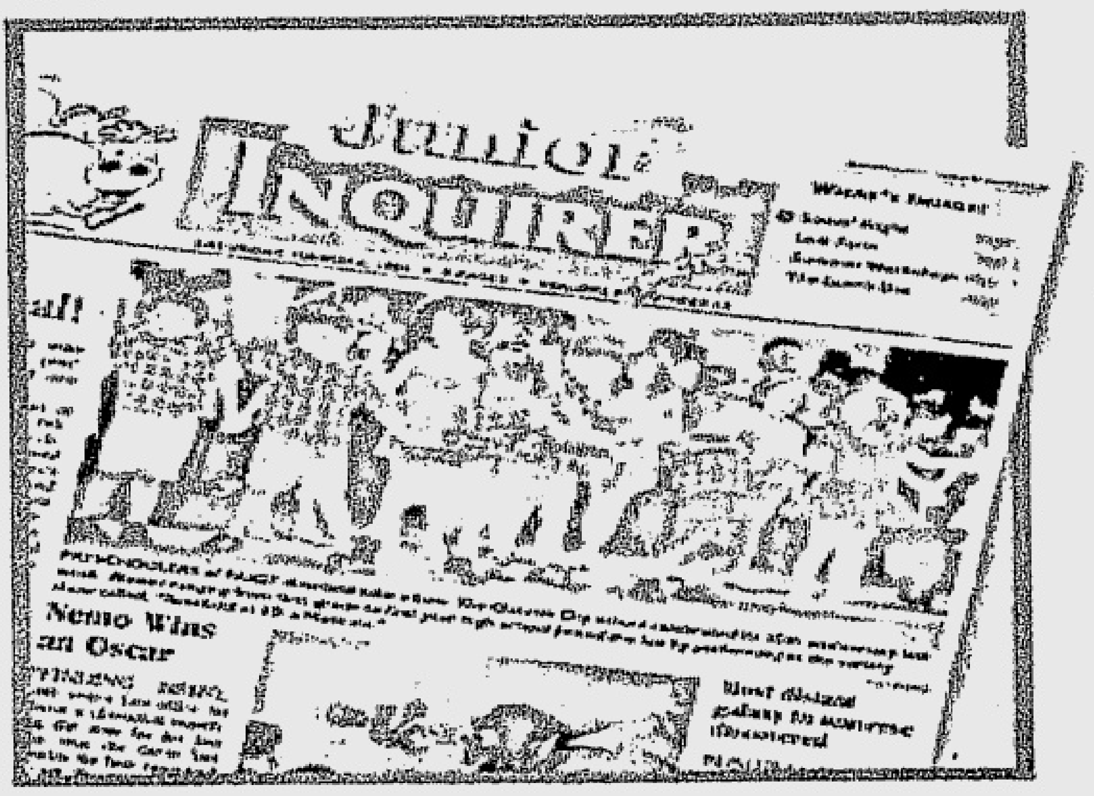
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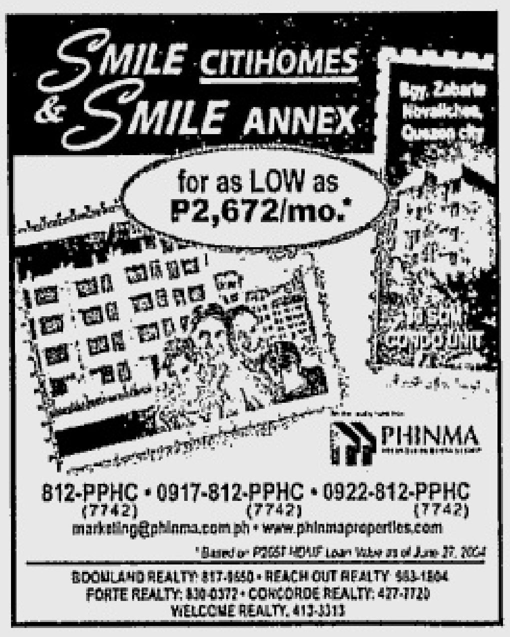

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Baguio Condominium Unit

Offered for Public Bidding on an "as-is, where-is" basis is an asset formerly owned by **WESTERN MINOLCO CORPORATION (WMC)** consisting of a fully furnished two-storey condominium unit with a floor area of 193 square meters, 3 bedrooms, kitchen, dining area, living room, 3 restrooms and a garage located at Green Mansions Condominium, Gibraltar Road, Baguio City, near Good Shepherd Convent and Mines View Park.

The asset is offered at its **Base Price of P3,900,100.00.**

Bids will be received, opened and tabulated in the presence of the bidders on January 26, 2005 at 3:00 p.m. at the PMO Conference Room, 6th Floor, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

Interested parties may secure the sale documents for a nominal fee of P1,500.00 from the PMO Marketing Office.

For more information, please call Ms. Jane V. Santiago at telephone numbers 892-2145; 818-4733.

(PDI--Dec. 20, 21 & 22, 2004)

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Fourth Judicial Region
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IN RE: PETITION FOR THE CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH IN THE CERTIFICATE OF LIVE BIRTH ISSUED BY THE OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL REGISTRAR OF CUENCA, BATANGAS.

GREGORIA R. LARCIA-GONZALES
Petitioner,
- versus -
THE MUNICIPAL CIVIL REGISTRAR OF CUENCA, BATANGAS,
Respondent

SP. PROC NO. 2004-0656

x-----------------------------------x

ORDER

Before this Court is a verified petition for correction of entry in the Certificate of Live Birth of herein petitioner, Gregoria R. Larcia-Gonzales, praying that after due notice, publication and hearing an Order be issued directing the Municipal Civil Registrar of Cuenca, Batangas to make the necessary correction in her birth certificate as regards the entry of his Date of Birth from September 8, 1950 to May 9, 1950

Finding the petition to be sufficient in form and substance, let the same be set for hearing on January 20, 2005 at 8:30 A.M., at which date and time any interested person may appear and show cause why the petition should not be granted.

The Branch Clerk of Court is directed to furnish the Office of the Clerk of Court with a copy of this Order for publication once a week for three (3) consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in the Province of Batangas at petitioner's expense.

Let copies of this Order and the Petition be furnished the Office of the Solicitor General and the City Prosecutor of Lipa. Likewise, let copies of this Order be sent to the Municipal Civil Registrar, Cuenca, Batangas, petitioner and counsel

SO ORDERED

Lipa City, 30 November 2004.

(Sgd.) JANE AURORA C. LANTION
Judge

(PDI--Dec. 21, 28, 2004 & Jan. 4, 2005)

NOTICE

Ito ay isang patalastas upang ipaalam sa lahat na mayroong LABAS SA HUKUMAN KASUNDUAN NG MGA TAGAPAGMANA ni LUCIA DILLERA at PAGBAUBAYA na ninotaryo ni Atty. Zenaida O. Balmas noong Nov. 18, 2004 as per Doc. No. 402; Page No. 81; Book No. 4; Series of 2004 in Quezon City. PAGPAPAUBAYA sa buong karapatan sa MARCO POLO LAND PROPERTIES, INC., na may pahatirang sulat at kalakalan sa 69-A Maginoo St., Diliman, Quezon City sa katauhan ni IMELDA D. SAN PEDRO at TEODORO L. LIM ay magkatuwang nagpapaganap ng kanilang KASUNDUAN (MOA) na ninotaryo ni Atty. Balmas noong Nov. 18, 2004 as per Doc. No. 403; Page No. 81; Book No. 4; Series of 2004 in Quezon City upang maisaayos ang lahat.

(PDI--Dec. 7, 14 & 21, 2004)

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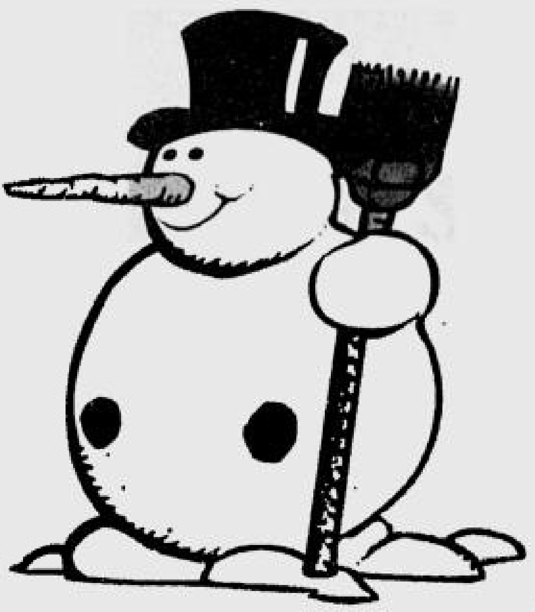

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NFA intervenes in sugar procurement

THE NATIONAL Food Authority (NFA) continues with its sugar buying operations following the instructions of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo for the agency to intervene in the sugar market to stabilize the price and supply of the commodity.

President Arroyo recently issued Executive Order (EO) 386 authorizing the agency to undertake sugar procurement for crop year 2004-2005.

The NFA buys "C" or reserved sugar from Planters Associations and Cooperatives at the price of P680 per Lkg for all mills based on the target per mill as provided by the Sugar Regulatory Authority (SRA).

A budget allocation of P100 million will be used by the NFA for sugar buying in Bacolod province.

Tan explained that NFA procures consolidated "C" quedans of Planters Associations/Cooperatives on a weekly basis, from November 7 to 14 until January 2005. Sugar planters who are not members of any associations/cooperatives can request SRA that quedans of their "C" sugar be consolidated with those of any associations/coops of their choice in order that NFA can likewise procure their sugar.

Associations and Coops that sold "C" sugar quedans to NFA shall have the option to "Buy Back" (Planters Option to Buy Back or POBB) their sugar from NFA. In this scheme, the planters are allowed to repurchase the sugar sold to NFA within six (6) months from the time of purchase but the planters will, however, have to pay the NFA's carrying cost of 1% per month for the first three (3) months, and 2% per month from the fourth to sixth months, on top of the NFA purchase price of P680/Lkg less liens.

NFA Bacolod provincial manager Pablito G. Gemarino said he has met with representatives of three Planters Federations in the province to discuss the guidelines and mechanics of the sugar buying.

ANNEX E: PUBLIC INFORMATION SHEET FOR PROPAGATION

Inilimbitahan ang publiko na magsumite ng kanilang mga puna o komento sa Punong Tagapamahala ng BPI (sa loob ng 30 araw mula sa petsa ng publikasyon) ukol sa Panukala Para sa Pagtatanim ng Mais Event NK603 (*Trade name: Roundup Ready Corn*) kabilang ang lahat ng progenies o mga bunga o produkto na mula sa pag-uugnay o pagtatawid-lahi (crosses) ng produktong ito sa alinmang uri ng mais na pinararami sa paraang kumbensyunal, at ang mais na nagtataglay ng mga aprubadong biotech events

1. Applicant's Address/Telephone & Facsimile Nos./E-mail Address
(Makipag-ugnayan sa sumusunod na address para sa karagdagang impormasyon)

Monsanto Philippines, Inc.
7th Floor, Ayala-FGU Building,
Acacia Ave. cor Alabang-Zapote Road
Madrigal Business Center, Alabang 1770
Muntinlupa City, Metro Manila, Philippines
Tel No: (63-2) 809-4848 / Fax No: (63-2) 807-7581/(63-2) 807-9938
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2. Pangalan ng Kaukulang Opisyal/Autorisadong Kinatawan

Bernard L. Canapi/Ana Liza D. Ugalino

3. Deskripsyon ng Regulated Article para sa Pagtatanim

Ang Corn Event NK603 (Trade name: Roundup Ready Corn) at ang lahat ng uri o hybrid ng mais na mula sa Event na ito ay taglay ang CP4 EPSPS coding sequence mula sa *Agrobacterium* sp CP4 strain. Ang CP4 EPSPS sequence para sa produksyon ng CP4 EPSPS protina na nagbibigay sa corn NK603 ng tibay sa pamatay-damong glyphosate.

Ang Corn Event NK603 at ang mga progenies o mga bunga o produkto nito ay aprubado ng mga nangangasiwang ahensya sa mga sumusunod na lugar: 1) Para sa Pagtatanim at sa pangkapaligirang kaligtasan (Estados Unidos,Canada, Japan, South Africa at Argentina) at 2) Para sa gamit bilang pagkain at pakain sa hayop (lahat ng nasa 1 pati ang Australia, Taiwan, Korea, Mexico, Russia, Philippines at ang European Union). (www.unl.edu/www.agbios.com). Base sa mga umiiral at tanggap na pandaigdigang alituntunin, mga proseso at prinsipyo na nadebelop ng kanilang mga experto at iba pang internasyunal na experto hinggil sa kaligtasan (hal. yaong mga nabuo sa pamamagitan ng FAO-WHO Joint Experts Consultations, ang OECD, ILSI at iba pa.), napagpasyahan ng mga ahensyang ito na ang Corn Event NK603 at mga produkto nito ay kasinligtas ng mga kumbensyunal na katapat nito.

4. Bansang/Mga bansang pinanggalingan ng Regulated Article

South Africa/Argentina

5. Maikling Buod ng mga Potensyal na Epekto sa Kalusugan at Kapaligiran

Ang Corn Event NK603 (Trade name: Roundup Ready Corn) at ang lahat ng uri o hybrid ng mais na mula sa Event na ito ay taglay ang CP4 coding sequence mula sa *Agrobacterium* sp CP4 strain. Ang CP4 EPSPS sequence para sa produksyon ng pangkaraniwang protinang CP4 EPSPS na nabibigay sa NK603 ng tibay sa pamatay-damong glyphosate. Ang EPSPS enzyme ay makikita sa shikimic acid pathway para sa biosynthesis ng aromatic amino acids ng halaman at microorganisms. Ang pagpigil sa enzyme ng glyphosate ay magdudulot ng kakulangan sa produksyon ng aromatic amino acids at pagtubo ng halaman. Ang aromatic amino acid biosynthetic pathway ay hindi makikita sa mammalian, avian o mga hayop na nasa tubig. Ito ang paliwanag ng mapiling activity o proseso ng halaman na nagiging bahagi ng mababang epekto sa kalusugan at pangkapaligiran dulot ng paggamit ng glyphosate ayon sa rekumendasyon ng itiketa.

Nabuo ang pagiging ligtas bilang pagkain, pakain sa hayop at pangkapaligirang kaligtasan base sa: pagsusuri ng CP4 EPSPS activity at homology sa protinang EPSPS na makikita sa ibat-ibang halaman, kabilang ang maaaring gamitin bilang pagkain; mababang dietary exposure ng protinang CP4 EPSPS; mabilis na pagkatunaw ng CP4 ESPS, at ang kakulangan sa pangkalahatang direktang pag-aaral ng naturing CP4 EPSPS.

Gamit bilang pagkain at pakain sa hayop ng mga produkto ng RRC NK603. Ang gamit pantao ng RRC NK603 ay inaasahang di magiging kakaiba sa kumbensyonal na katapat nito. Ang halaga bilang pakain sa hayop ng RRC NK603 ay hindi kakaiba sa isohybrids nito (Querubin, 2004, Taylor, 2001, Stanisiewski et al., 2002). Ang RRC NK603 ay hindi naiiba sa kumbensyonal na katumbas ayon sa kumposisyon, kaligtasan, at kabutihan at ibang katulad na panuntunan sa mais na kasalukuyang tinatanim, ikinakalakal at ginagamit.

Naipakita sa pamamagitan ng analisis ng mga susing sustansya; kabilang ang mga protina, fat, carbohydrates, moisture, calories, amino acids, fatty acids at minerals ang nutrisyunal na katumbasan at kabutihan ng Roundup Ready Corn NK603. Ang nutrisyunal na katumbas ay napatunayan sa maraming pag-aaral ng pagpapakain ng mga nangingitlog na manok, at daga, na nakapaloob ang clinical at histological na pagsusuri. Magkahalintulad rin ang pangkapaligirang impak ng RR Corn sa kumbensyunal na mais. Ipinakikita ng mga resulta ng pag-aaral ng RR corn sa pagkain, pakain sa hayop at kapaligiran ay kasinligtas ng mga produktong mula sa kumbensyunal na mais.

Residyu ng glyphosate ay hindi nakita sa lupa, butil at dahon. Walang residyu ng glyphosate ang natagpuan sa lupa base sa limit of detection na 0.005 µg/g at sa mga bahagi ng halaman na butil at dahon na base naman sa limit of detection na 0.001 µg/g. Ipinakita ng mga resulta na ang tama at normal na paggamit ng glyphosate sa RRC ay di makapagdudulot ng mataas na ecotoxicological na epekto sa lupa at di mapanganib bilang pagkain at pakain sa hayop.

Ipinakita ng tapatang pagsusuri na ang inaasahang ekspresyon ng phenotypic na katangian ay hindi nagbago sa RRC NK603 kahit na ginamitan ito ng glyphosate. Ang pagkakaroon ng tibay laban sa glyphosate ay di dahilan para maging damo o mapanira ang mais sapagkat walang napunang pagbabago sa katangian ng pagpaparami at paglaki sa transgenic at isohybrid. Di rin nagbago ang RRC NK603 sa mga mahahalagang sakit at peste kagaya ng Asiatic Corn Borer (Monsanto Report 2004). Ang panganib sa di mapigil unang paggamit sa kapaligiran sa pamamagitan ng out-crossing o pagtatawid lahi o hybridization sa ligaw na relatives ay di umiiral sa Pilipinas. Ang mais na inaalagaan o nililinang ay di maaring mabuhay sa mga lugar na di pansaka at wala pang mga ulat na ang mais ay isang damo. Ang mais ay hindi mapanira at isang mahinang kaagaw dahil sa kanyang maliit na kakayahang kumalat at mabuhay ng walang tulong o pakikialam ng tao (Cudera, 2002).

Ang mga benepisyo ng RRC NK603 sa mga magsasaka at lipunan base sa inaprubahang multi lokasyong pagsubok ng NCBP. Ang abilidad ng RRC NK603 na hindi maapektuhan ng parehong malaki at kumulatibong lebel ng glyphosate ay nagpapahintulot ng pagamit ng herbisidyo sa mga pananim para sa mas malawak na pagpuksa ng damo. Ang herbisidyong Roundup ay nagbigay ng napakahusay na kontrol laban sa mga damo, sedges at broadleaf na kakompetensya ng mais. Ang RR weed management ay nakapagdulot ng malaking ani at kita kumpara sa mga nakasanayang pamamaraan ng pag kontrol ng damo. Dagdag dito, ang sistemang RR ay kabagay ng tipid saka at ng mga pagsisikap para mapangalagaan ang lupa sa mga mataas na lugar (Monsanto Report 2004).

Aprubado para sa Publikasyon:

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Date:_______________

(PDI--Dec. 21, 2004)

ANNEX E: PUBLIC INFORMATION SHEET FOR PROPAGATION

The public is hereby invited to submit their comments to the BPI Director (within 30 days from date of publication) on the Proposal for the Propagation of Corn Event NK603 (*Tradename: Roundup Ready Corn*) and all progenies derived from crosses of the product with any conventionally-bred corn and corn containing approved-biotech events

1. Applicant's Address/Telephone & Facsimile Nos./E-mail Address
(Please contact this address for more information)

Monsanto Philippines, Inc.
7th Floor, Ayala-FGU Building,
Acacia Ave. cor Alabang-Zapote Road
Madrigal Business Center, Alabang 1770
Muntinlupa City, Metro Manila, Philippines
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www.monsanto.com

2. Name of Responsible Officer/Authorized Representative

Bernard L. Canapi/Ana Liza D. Ugalino

3. Description of the Regulated Article for Propagation

Corn Event NK603 (Tradename: Roundup Ready Corn) and all corn lines/hybrids derived from this Event contain the CP4 EPSPS coding sequence from *Agrobacterium* sp CP4 strain. The CP4 EPSPS sequence encodes for the production of the naturally-occurring CP4 EPSPS protein that renders the corn NK603 tolerant to glyphosate, a herbicide known to be environmentally-compatible.

Corn Event NK603 and progenies are approved by regulatory agencies in the following areas: 1) For Propagation and environmental safety in the United States of America, Canada, Japan, South Africa and Argentina and 2) Food/feed approvals (all in 1 plus Australia, Taiwan, Korea, Mexico, Russia, Philippines and the European Union).(www.unl.edu/www.agbios.com). These agencies, relying on their existing internationally-accepted guidelines, processes and principles developed by their and other international safety experts (e.g. those convened by the FAO-WHO Joint Experts consultations, the OECD, ILSI and others) arrived at the decision that Roundup Ready Corn Event NK603 and its products have been found to be as safe as its conventional counterpart.

4. If to be Imported, Country (ies) of Origin of the Regulated Article

South Africa/Argentina

5. Brief Summary of Potential Effects on Human Health and the Environment

Corn Event NK603 (Tradename: Roundup Ready Corn) and all corn lines/hybrids derived from this Event contain the CP4 EPSPS coding sequence from *Agrobacterium* sp CP4 strain. The CP4 EPSPS sequence encodes for the production of the naturally occurring CP4 EPSPS protein that renders the corn NK603 tolerant to glyphosate, a herbicide known to be environmentally compatible. The EPSPS enzyme is present in the shikimic acid pathway for the biosynthesis of aromatic amino acids in plants and microorganisms. Inhibition of this enzyme by glyphosate leads to a deficiency in the production of aromatic amino acids and lack growth in plants. The aromatic amino acid biosynthetic pathway is not present in mammalian, avian or aquatic animals. This explains the selective activity in plants and contributes to the low risk to human health and the environment from the use of glyphosate according to label recommendations.

The food and feed safety of RR corn was established based upon: the evaluation of CP4 EPSPS activity and homology to EPSPS proteins present in a diversity of plants, including those used for foods; the low dietary exposure to the CP4 EPSPS protein; the rapid digestibility of CP4 EPSPS, and the lack of toxicity or allergenicity of EPSPSs generally and by direct studies of this specific CP4 EPSPS.

Food and Feed Uses of RRC NK 603 Products. The human uses of RRC NK603 are expected not to be different from its conventional counterparts. Feeding value of RRC NK603 grains is not different from the isohybrids (Querubin, 2004, Taylor et al., 2001, Stanisiewski et al., 2002).RRC NK603 is not materially different from its conventional counterpart in terms of composition, safety, wholesomeness and any other relevant parameter from corn that is currently grown, marketed and consumed.

The nutritional equivalence and wholesomeness of Roundup Ready Corn NK603 compared to conventional corn was demonstrated by the analysis of key nutrients, including proteins, fat, carbohydrates, moisture, calories, amino acids, fatty acids, and minerals. The nutritional equivalence of RR corn to conventional corn was confirmed in numerous feeding studies with broiler chickens and rats, which included clinical and histological evaluations. The environmental impact of RR corn is also comparable to conventional corn. The results of these food, feed and environmental studies demonstrate that RR corn is as safe as conventional corn.

Non-detectable glyphosate residues in soil, corn grains and leaves. In-crop Roundup herbicide applications did not produce any detectable residues in soil (detection limit. = 0.005 µg/g) and plant tissues (detection limit = 0.005 µg/g) that include grain and leaves. Results showed that the glyphosate treatments in RRC under normal use patterns pose low ecotoxicological risks in the soil and insignificant food and feed risks (Monsanto Report, 2004).

Comparative evaluations showed that the expected expression of phenotypic traits in RRC NK603 did not change even with the application of Roundup herbicide. Tolerance to glyphosate will not in itself render corn to be weedy or invasive to the natural habitats where it is grown since there were no observed changes in reproductive or growth characteristics between the transgenic corn and its isohybrid. Likewise, the introgression of the glyphosate tolerant gene did not affect the reaction of RRC NK603 to major diseases and pests, such as the Asiatic Corn Borer (Monsanto Report, 2004).The risk of uncontrolled introduction into the environment though out crossing or hybridization to wild relatives is virtually non-existent in the Philippines. Cultivated corn is not likely to establish in non-crop habitats and there are no reports of corn surviving as a weed. Corn is not invasive and a weak competitor with its limited seed dispersal and its inability to grow without human intervention (Cudera, 2002).

Benefits of Roundup Ready Corn (RRC) NK603 to farmers and society from the NCBP approved multi location trials. The ability of RRC NK603 to tolerate both substantial and cumulative levels of glyphosate allows the in-crop herbicide application for broad spectrum weed control. Roundup herbicide provided excellent control of grasses, sedges and broadleaf weeds competing with the corn. Roundup Ready (RR) weed management systems provided considerable yield and/or net income advantage over conventional weed control practices. Further, RR systems may compliment conservation tillage initiatives and effort to conserve the topsoil in the uplands (Monsanto Report, 2004).

Approved for Publication:

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(PDI--Dec. 21, 2004)

Typhoon victims get support from organizations

THE SHORT series of typhoons "Violeta", "Winnie", and "Yoyong" that have left Philippines last Dec. 3, paved the way for the aerial survey and reconnaissance trips done in Northern and Southern Luzon for the past three days now. The activity was done by the Deutsche Welthungerhilfe/German Agro Action and its partner, the Philippine-German Development Foundation, Inc. with the assistance of the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) and the Philippine Coast Guard.

This survey gave enough data to tighten up several "loose ends" in their systematic plan to do the relief and rehabilitation activities in the affected areas of Aurora, Quezon, Camarines Norte and Catanduanes. Presently, the relief goods are on-their way to the affected areas as the Echo, the Humanitarian Aid of the European Commission and the Foreign Office of Germany immediately release a total EURO300, 000. for the relief and rehabilitation activities. Two (2) teams are working with the volunteer partner organizations in provinces of Aurora Quezon, Camarines Norte and Catanduanes. And focus areas were identified according to level and magnitude of damage impact.

Under this disaster response project, the unified works of Echo European Commission, German Agro Action, PhilGerFund, and the PhilGerFund-assisted Organizations have found time and resources to support the field level activities.

The communications to the groups in the inland-upland areas of Kalinga, Apayao, Ifugao, Benguet, Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino provinces which were also affected by the typhoon, have been difficult to establish. Hence, the reconnaissance teams are already organized to do immediate ocular survey. It is expected that the data they present in the next few days may help in the formation of yet another procedure to respond to their specific typhoon-related problems. Initial reports from the German Agro Action Team mentioned that the biggest damage are croplands and the small forest area in the sloppy mountain, particularly crops such as rice, vegetables, without necessarily undermining the hundreds of landslides that clogged the road access and water ways for the human settlements to access basic necessities.

UHAY !
B FESTIVAL

BOLBOK FESTIVAL

Students from public and private schools in San Juan, Batangas participated in the street dancing presentation, which is one of the highlights of the Bolbok Festival. The event was launched during the 156th Founding Anniversary celebration of the town last December 12.

Heartwarming Christmas gift from Up Close and Personal

FAMILY that was shattered because of poverty and how they were reunited in the name of love in this most special time of the year...this is yet another different story that Up Close and Personal with Marissa Del Mar will feature on Tuesday Dec. 21, at IBC 13 entitled "The Gift". Up Close and Personal with Marissa Del Mar produced by Millicent Productions Inc, is successful in its format thus bringing to the viewers the heart warming stories be it the elites, selected few and the everyday pinoy.

It highlights the achievements of celebrities in sport, entertainment industry, businessmen, politicians and government people. Through Del Mar's production outfit, the Millicent Productions it has become a launch pad of her public service endeavor, giving way to the genesis of the Millicent Foundation.

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KC PEREZ DE VENECIA

(April 6, 1988 – December 17, 2004)

Beloved daughter to **Speaker Jose and Georgina de Venecia**, wonderful sister to **Alexandra Haner, Leslie Norton, Vivian Garcia, Jose de Venecia III, Carissa Cruz, Felipe Cruz III**, best friend and sister to **Christopher de Venecia** and loving granddaughter to **Azucena Vera Perez**, amazing classmate, precious niece, member of the cool cousin group *The Bulilit Gang* and cherished friend.

A fun-loving, passionate, sweet, intelligent girl who lived life to the fullest. She spoke her mind freely and loved with all her heart. Please pray for her eternal rest.

Her remains lie in state at Santuario de San Antonio Church, Forbes Park, Makati. Interment Mass will be tomorrow, December 22 at 10:00 a.m. at Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati.

In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate donations to the KC de Venecia Foundation.

MELBA CLEMENTE DY TIAPCO

Peacefully joined our Lord on December 19, 2004.

wife of **Ernesto C. Dy Tiapco**
mother of **Mei-ling, Christine, Dan, Tong, Egad, Kito and Jay.**

Her family, in-laws, grandchildren and great grandchildren request relatives and friends to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels (LMC), Guadalupe, Makati. Funeral Mass will be at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, December 24, 2004 at LMC. Burial will follow at the Holy Gardens Memorial Park, Sumulong Highway, Antipolo.

LAUREANO S. MENDIOLA

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on December 19, 2004 at the age of 87.

His bereaved children **GONYING & JOJO; TEDDIE & JUNJIT; LARRY & LORNA; TOM & ALMA; GLENN & BIDAY; ARLEEN & REY; LAW**; grandchildren and other relatives and friends request the readers to join them in praying for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His body lies in state at Mabolo St., Malolos City.

Interment will be on December 22, 2004 at the St. Vincent Memorial Park, Mabolo, Malolos City at 12:00 noon.

HELEN MARTELINO BAYHON GOMEZ

of Ibajay, Aklan and Calbayog City, Samar

Died in the Grace of our Lord on December 19, 2004 at the age of 91.

Her loving husband Tomas Jr. (†); children Buddy & Tessie Samson, Eddie & Helen Ronquillo, Venus & Mike Deming, Minnie & Romy Tarrayo, Girlie & Bill Kaltenbruner, Baby & Douglas Baarde (†), and Gandhi; grandchildren and great grandchildren, brothers and sisters, in-laws, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Premier 1, Loyola Memorial Chapels, Inc., Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on the 24th day of December 2004 after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
— 2 Corinthians 5:8

Our Dearly Beloved
"Nang"

CRESCENCIA QUINES AGAS

of Tagudin, Ilocos Sur; Kamias, Quezon City and New York, U.S.A.

Peacefully joined our Lord on December 17, 2004 at the age of 85.

Her son Susano and daughter-in-law Belen Real; grandchildren Mario & Gabriel and other relatives and friends request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Holy Family Parish Church, K-1 corner K-7, Kamias, Quezon City.

Cremation to be announced later.

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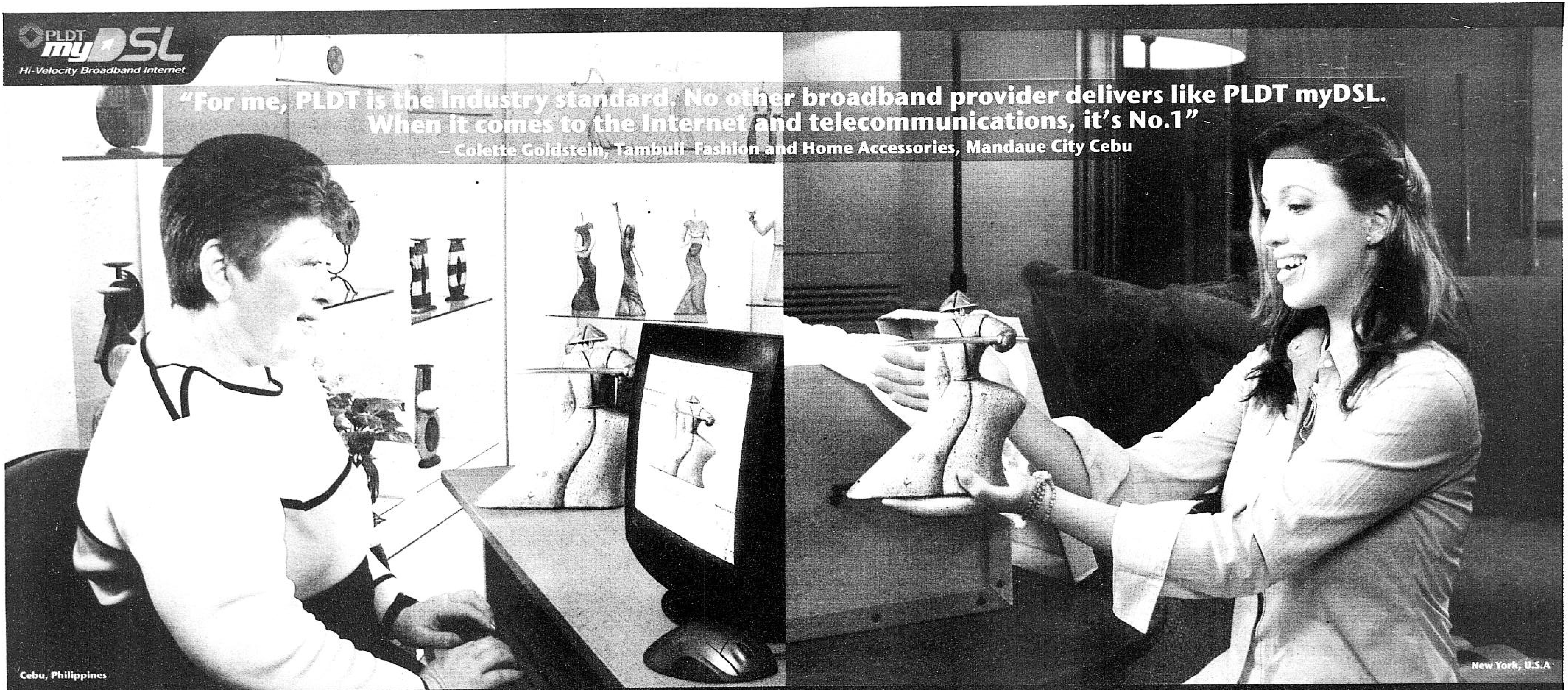
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Love's gifts

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

You can harness the power of love to achieve your goals

"What remains now is the deepest healing of all, the healing love."
—Deepak Chopra

THERE are only two great forces on earth—love and fear. And we are free to choose between them.

Though Christmas is the season of love, expression of the spirit of loving is not meant to be a once-a-year tradition but a daily routine. Make a bargain with love, one that commits your soul, and all these gifts will be yours.

What love can accomplish

Here is a list of things that love can do. Take the time to write down all the feelings you associate with each wisdom. Write down what you expect from love.

If you are attuned to who you really are, then love will definitely respond and you can harness its power.

- Love is meant to heal. Remember all the wounds that need healing, the differences that need to be overcome, the bridges that need to be built. Example: I want to fix my love relationship.
- Love is meant to renew. Welcome a resurgence of newness in your life. Example: I want to put enthusiasm to my work.
- Love is meant to make us safe. Be self-confident in everything you do. Do not let any insecurity affect you. Example: I want to feel safe about my own decisions and actions.
- Love is meant to give us power. You have inner strength. Example: I want to reject anger in my life because it weakens me.
- Love is meant to make us certain; not to have doubts. Declare certainty now. Example: I want to be sure of myself.
- Love is meant to remove fear. Reject instability. Example: I want to be fearless.
- Love is immortal. There is no end to love—it simply evolves. Example: I am constantly transformed by love.
- Love is meant to bring peace. There is no room for strife and discord because the loving heart is centered in peace. Example: I want peace to reign in my heart.
- Love is meant to harmonize differences. There are no problems love cannot transcend. All obstacles are overcome. Example: I want harmony to inspire my life.

LOVE/ C3

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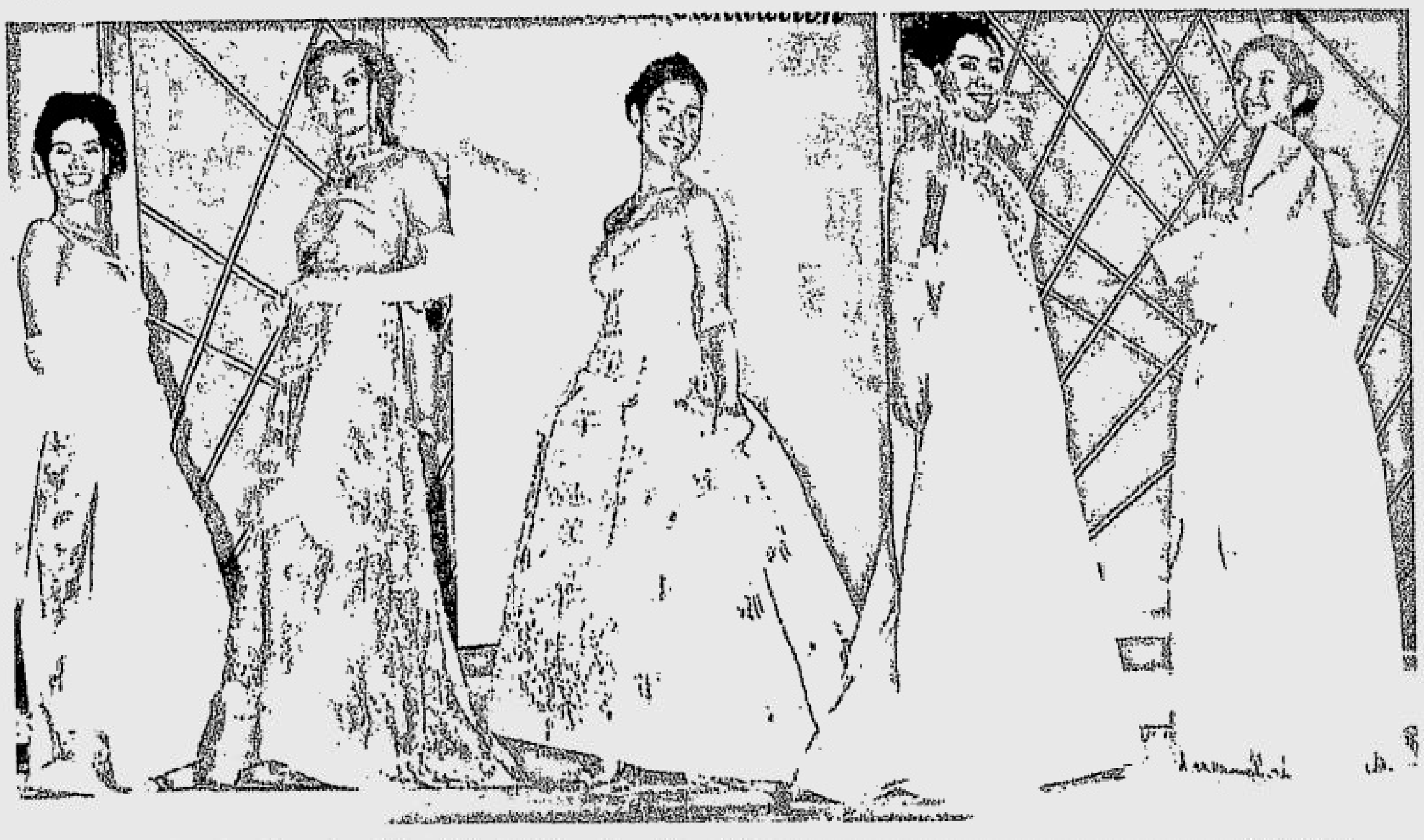


MANILA'S loveliest five: Shara Que, Bianca Manalo, Diana How, Dianne Sison and Fenina Tugade in their gorgeous Pitoy Moreno gowns

FIVE of the women behind the affair's huge success: Nini Licaros, Consul Helen Ong, Yoli Ayson, Joanne Matschuck and Becky Garcia

TWO of Manille's hostesses with the mostest: glam gal Mely Ablaza, with business magnate husband Luis Ablaza, and honorary consul of Angola Helen Ong, with her husband Dr. Luciano B. Ong

Lovely of face and spirit

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen on Kodak Max

OTHER stars of the night: world class couturier Pitoy Moreno and Burger Machine's first lady, socialite Fe Rodriguez

MABEL Abano and Makati's first lady, Dr. Elenita Binay

THIS gal is full of soul and Evelyn Lim Forbes is on the roll.

PAL's top stewardess Julie Dixon

IT'S Motown time: Gary V. with cool Gina Lopez in her "London look"

ALL roads led recently to the Makati Shangri-La Hotel for the annual presentation of Manila's Five Loveliest, stylishly hosted by hot hot brand names Smart Gold and Infinity, and Sony-Ericsson at the Grand Rizal Ballroom.

Our town's glamour set was there with great anticipation for an event where five young misses—all with the four Bs—were the main attractions, *palanggas*.

The evening started with a blast. Manila's five loveliest knocked our socks off and the ladies' Blahniks and Guccis, as well, as they showed off their fab dancing skills—and Cole Haan shoes—in an exciting, fun, hip number.

After a short amusing breather, thanks to the wit and spontaneity of the host of hosts, **Johnny Litton**, no less, the five girls sashayed on stage in **Gerry Katigbak**'s cocktail and formal gown creations. Gerry, by the way, also produced and choreographed the presentation, which was directed beautifully by talented **Roxanne Lapuz**, *palanggas*.

The five gals from *buena* families were at their elegant best, showing off stunning formal evening gowns and other fashionable outfits superbly designed by the one-of-a-kind King of Philippine Fashion, **Pitoy Moreno**. But who else, *n'est-ce pas*?

If that wasn't awesome enough, we found splendor and excitement in the voice of Broadway singer, good-looking **Jose Llana**, who jetted in from the United States to be the special guest of the event. Wow!

Après dinner was served, an audio-visual presentation highlighted the task of Manila's Five Loveliest. It reminded us that the occasion was more than just a search for women with beauty and brains. It underscored that the affair was a "coming together" of people dedicated to using their talents to help a society in need.

More than anything else, the crowd was made to realize what young 21st-century Filipino women think about current issues and how they react to them. It proved to us that the young gals were not only blessed with a good education and upbringing, but also social consciousness and values, dahlings.

Another highlight was the auction of must-haves—Cole Haan shoes and eye-catching Sony-Ericsson cell phones. Also auctioned were must-go exotic tours on Star Cruises, dahlings!

As I chatted with the club's brilliant and caring chair, Nini Licaros, she explained to me that "proceeds from this event will go to scholarships for the underprivileged. Plus we will be continuing the endeavor that has made it possible to help many deserving students.

"In fact, Maurice, the first batch of Love 14 scholars will be graduating next school year," she said with a smile, glad to be able to help our less fortunate brothers and sisters. And I smiled, too.

This year's Manila's five loveliest received gift items from Rustan's and Prestige Marketing, sole distributor of Moschino Courtier & Parfum and Dolce & Gabbana.

SOCIALITE Otta Montinola with her buddy, ace photographer Pancho Escaler

ROCK, Baby rock! Bituin Escalante and the "Supremes" rock the Tent

THANKS for the gift: Charity worker and socialite Charie Lao B. and husband, popular gentleman Amado Bagatsing, receive their raffle 'prize from Love 14 officer Mons Romulo Tantoco

AT THEIR best! Carmen Ang, Ana Ledesma, Marissa Fenton and Vina Morales

LIKE mother, like daughter: Ella and her mother Alice Villanueva

QUEEN and King in the alcohol business: Fe Leabres and husband, business magnate Ernie Yu

MEN of power: T. Takahashi, William How Sr. and M. Uno

STYLISH women: Cinderella's Therese Santos and gorgeous Che Singson

MOTHER and daughter team: pretty Paula and mom Lita Garcia

READY to party: Ching Escaler and Peter Garrucho

PROUD dad and mom: William and Mila How, with their daughter Diana, one of Manila's Loveliest

POPULAR plastic surgeon George Neri and his wife, top golfer May Santos; Gov. Chavit Singson and the stunningly beautiful Che Tiongson

LETTY Jorman and nice Shirley Chua

INTERNATIONAL socialites: Gigi Reyes, Marjo Choa and top lady of the Philippine Tatler, Harrison Plaza and Love 14, Irene Martel Francisco

Motown at the Tent

The popular ABS-CBN and Bantay Kalikasan really know how to organize a super bash, *palanggas*.

"Motown in Motion," hyped as "the biggest dance party concert," featured mega hot artists, who packed them in at the NBC Tent.

The benefit concert was for the last phase of the La Mesa Watershed project of that woman with the four Bs and a heart of gold, **Gina Lopez**. The tireless persona behind the restoration of the La Mesa Dam as the city's primary water source, Gina led the partying set that rocked to the upbeat rhythm of Motown hits. Dressed in stylized '60s- and '70s-theme outfits were "Motown in Motion" organizers—vivacious and adorable **Evelyn Lim Forbes**, exotic beauty **Otta Montinola**, world traveler and top charity organizer **Josephine Knox**, **Celia Silang Cruz** and **Chit Guerrero**.

Ricco and Tina Ocampo, **Chingbee Kalaw and Bobby Cuenca**, **Ching Escaler and Peter Garrucho**, **Popoy and Dolly de Rosario**, **Lizzie Zobel**, talented interior designer **Cocoy Cordoba**, and **Pilie Aquino** were definitely "in the groove," dahlings.

Super hosts of the affair, **Mitch Valdes** and **Ariel Ureta**, did a great job of turning back the hands of time and transporting the crowd back to Motown days.

Keeping the partying animals' adrenaline on the up and up was Nescafe, which was being poured endlessly. At the end of the affair, each one went home party-ed out but happy to have a CD compilation of Motown hits, courtesy of MCA International, natch!

Love's gifts

From page C1

- Love is meant to bring us closer to God. The source of love is a boundless untiring supply of goodness and abundance. Example: I invite God to live in my heart.

If you have accomplished this list, congratulations! You have made a deal with the indestructible part of you—your soul. Rest easy now because love will take care of the rest.

You don't have to bother with the list or even try to make it come true. There is nothing else you need to do except this one rule:

"When you feel love, act on it. Speak your heart. Be truthful. Remain open."

You have now aligned yourself with love. After two months, read your list again. You will be surprised at how much you have accomplished.

As Deepak Chopra says, "Asking for love is one of the most difficult things for anyone to risk and by risking it first in your heart, you open a door that will never close again."

Comfort tea

Make it a habit to take a cup of hot ginger tea with a teaspoon of honey. A daily regimen of this should help prevent colds.

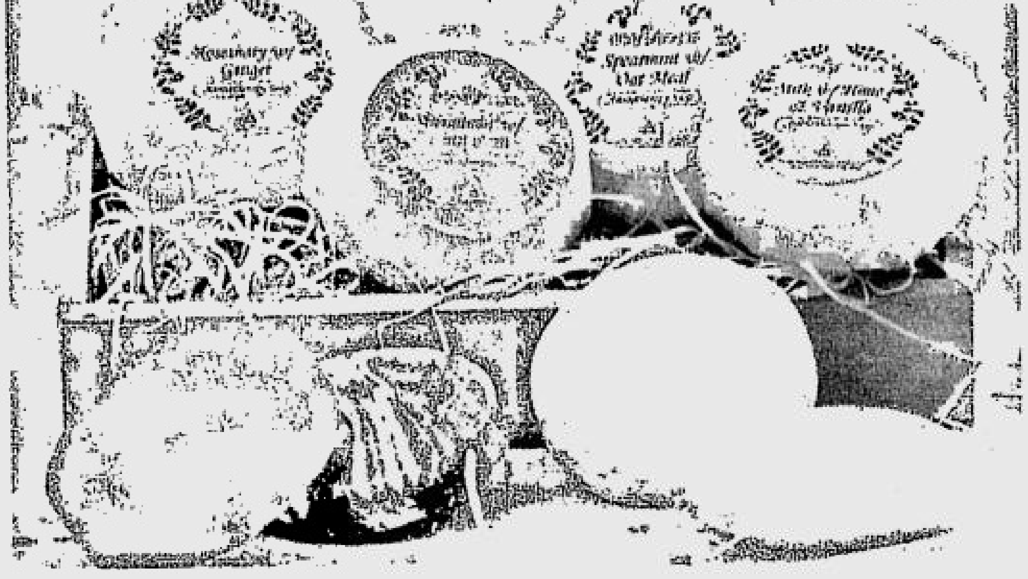
Love inhalation

Add a tablespoon of fresh lemon juice and ginger to a bowl of hot water. Cover your head with a towel and take in all its goodness. Add a drop of peppermint oil if you wish.

Love and light be your gift this season.

Reference: "The Path to Love", Deepak Chopra

Gifts for good health



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INSTANT drinks in coffee flavors contain 10 cleansing herbs that gently detoxify the body.

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CM Star's products harness natural therapeutics from Mother Nature's healing gardens. Enjoy encapsulated natural food supplements.

The company carries a range of products for health improvement, such as Grape Seed Extract, Co-Enzyme Q-10, Milk Thistle, Dia-Herbs, Echinacea, and Slim and Fit capsules.

Visit the CM Star head office at 86 9th Ave., Cubao, Quezon City and learn more about these products in a free seminar. Call 9125667 or 9139066.

Make your home a soothing haven

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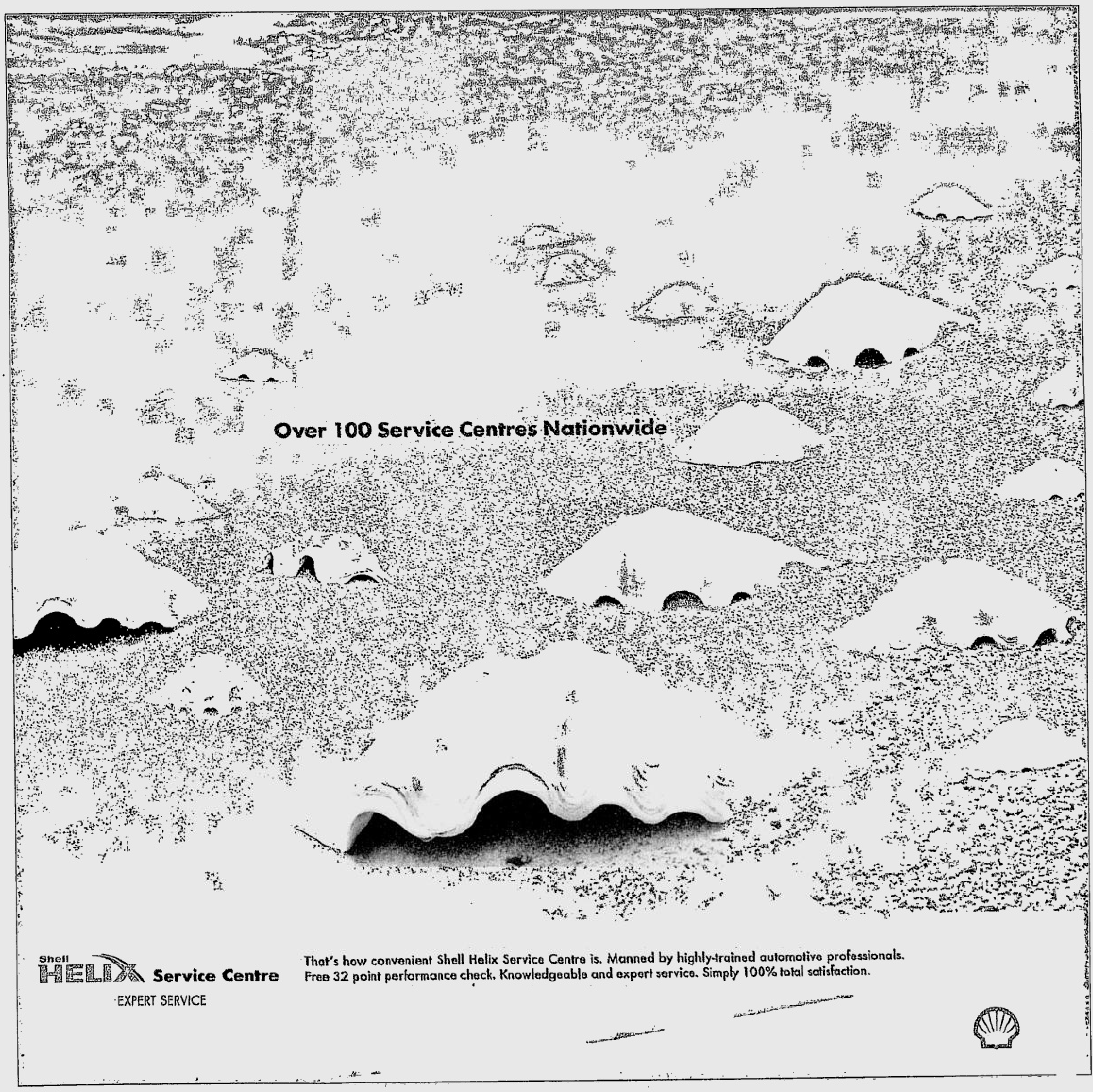
Retailing at P80 each, you can select from several relaxing scents--the cooling, refreshing citrusy grapefruit peels; sensuous Mediterranean rose petals; cool and calming cedarwood; soothing, stimulating eucalyptus leaves; and purifying essence of wild lavender flowers, among others.

Look for the most luxurious selection in home fragrance oils in the Zen Zest store at Glorietta 3, Makati and at Zen Zest kiosks and outlets in leading shopping centers nationwide.

Zen Zest outlets are located at Shopwise Libis, SM North Edsa, SM North Edsa Annex, SM Megamall Bldg. B, SM Baguio, SM Pampanga, SM Bacoor, SM City Cebu, Robinson's Galleria, Robinson's Place Ermita, Robinson's Bacolod, Robinson Big R Cagayan de Oro, Ayala Center Cebu, Gaisano Mall Bacolod, Gaisano Mall Davao, Festival Mall, NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan and Pavilion Mall Laguna.

Check out the newly-opened outlets at Robinsons Place Pioneer, Robinsons Metro East and Tutuban Center Mall.

SURROUND yourself with the relaxing scent of a Zen Zest oil at the end of a busy day.



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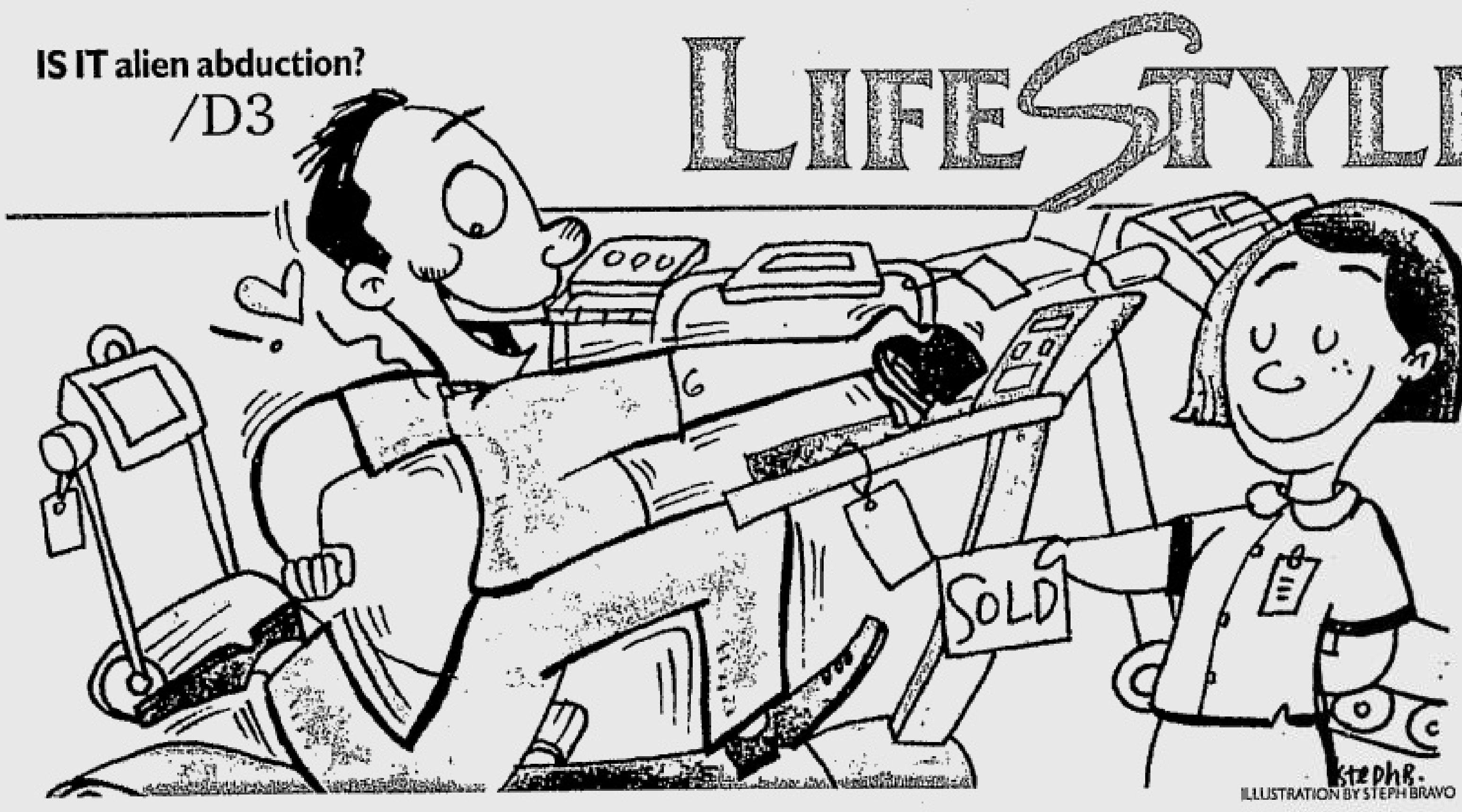
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Treadmill buying guide

Part Two

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

YOU can increase the intensity of your workout without having to walk faster by increasing the elevation of the treadmill. Look for an automatic electric incline feature that can raise the machine by at least 10 percent. Usually, the higher a machine can incline, the more expensive it is.

Cheap treadmills use a manual crank with hydraulic pistons to elevate it. These treadmills may not be able to support your weight properly in the elevated position.

A treadmill should reach a top speed of at least eight miles per hour. If you are a serious runner, look for a higher speed capability.

The incline and speed buttons should respond quickly when pressed. You don't want a sluggish response when you want to slow down or speed up the machine especially when you are running fast.

The belt should respond smoothly and not with an abrupt jerk. The same goes for the tilt mechanism when the treadmill is raised or lowered.

Display console

The display console should be large and high enough so you can read the numbers and functions without having to look down, which can cause dizziness.

An average console will display speed, pace, incline, time, distance, heart rate and calories burned. Numbers should be easy to read.

It is nice to have a reading ledge so you can read while you work out and side trays for a water bottle, portable music device or a towel.

Programs

All treadmills have a manual program that lets you start the machine by just pressing a button, then adjusting the speed and incline as you wish. Preset programs range from simple to advanced. The more advance the programs are, the more expensive the treadmill will be. But you may not need all the programs.

On the other hand, as you become more fit, you may want more challenging workout programs.

The treadmill should allow you to switch

TREADMILL/ D3

> Cheap treadmills may not be able to support your weight properly in the elevated position

my Gift to myself...

myspot

2ND FLOOR STARMALL, LAS PIÑAS/ TELS.:8725235 • 3733365

GLOBE GIZMO PREPAID
DISCOVER.CONNECT.PLAY
TEXTMAS TREATS
MAKE THEIR CHRISTMAS WISH COME TRUE.
GET GUESS KIDS CLOTHES AT 15% OFF!
Tell your child to text WISH to 2811 now and enjoy big savings on the season's funkiest outfits! With Globe Gizmo Prepaid, the magic of the holidays is just a text away.
Get all these and more, only from Globe Gizmo Prepaid!
Register your child's number now! Text REG to 2811 using your Globe Prepaid or G-plan to start availing of these offers.
GUESS
KIDS
'tis the season to make great things possible
Globe
HANDYPHONE

MECHANICS:
1. All registered Globe Gizmo Prepaid subscribers are entitled to join the promo. To avail of the offer, child must first text WISH to 2811 using a Globe Gizmo Prepaid SIM. This text is free of charge.
2. Child will receive a text reply asking him/her about his/her Christmas wish. Child must reply with "1" to check out the possible Christmas gifts offered in the promo.
3. Child will be prompted to choose from a list of possible gift wishes: Guess Kids clothes, Robosapien toy, or watch Disney On Ice at Araneta Coliseum. Child can choose desired wish by replying to 2811 with the number of the chosen gift.
4. Child will then receive a message informing him/her that Santa received his/her wish. The system will send a text message to the parent informing him/her of the child's wish with any of the following discount mobile coupons:
   - 30% off on Disney On Ice Ticket purchases (weekday shows) at the Ticketnet Araneta Center outlet from December 10 to January 2.
   - 20% discount (₱1,000 off) with every 14" Robosapien purchase at participating Kidz Station, Rustan and Toy Kingdom outlets in GMA, Cavite, Pampanga and Batangas from December 10 to January 15.
   - 15% off on clothes purchased at all Guess Kids outlets in GMA from December 10 to January 15.

Sample Mobile Coupon:
Show this text to all Guess Kids outlets in GMA to avail of 15% off on clothes

5. Parent shall present the discount mobile coupon at the participating outlet to avail of the discount.
6. The child can choose up to 3 different gift wishes. If the child wishes for a gift item twice, parent will only receive 1 discount mobile coupon for the 2 wishes.
7. If more than 1 child is registered under the parent, and all children wished for the same gift, parent will receive 1 discount mobile coupon per child.

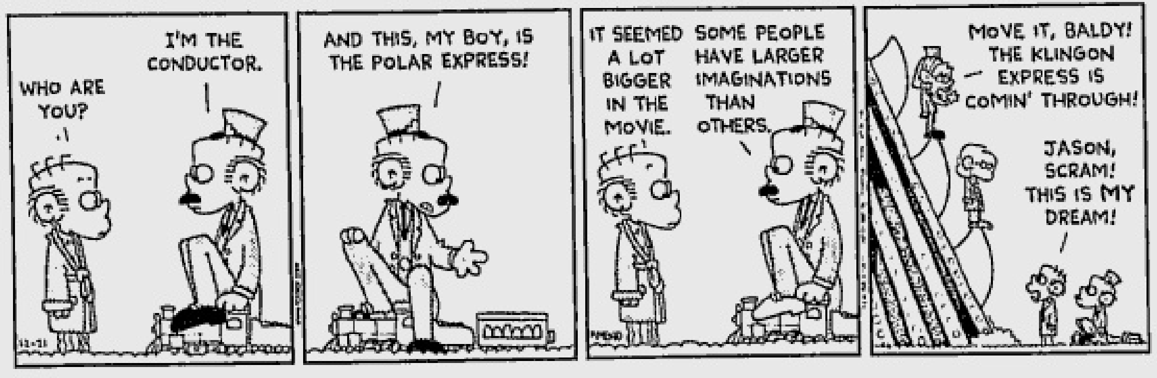
PROMO PERIOD:
December 10, 2004 to January 15, 2005

For more information about Globe Gizmo Prepaid, call Globe Telecom Customer Service at 730-1000.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5992, Series of 2004.

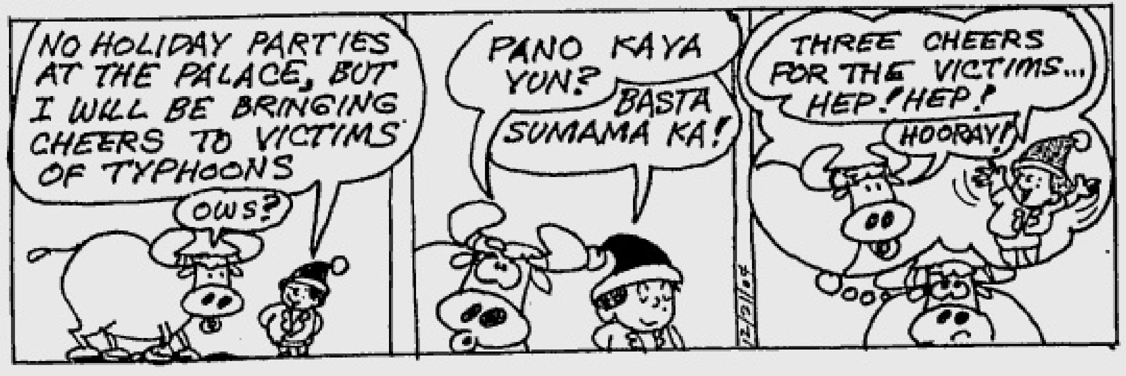
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHO ARE YOU?
I'M THE CONDUCTOR.
AND THIS, MY BOY, IS THE POLAR EXPRESS!
IT SEEMED A LOT BIGGER IN THE MOVIE.
SOME PEOPLE HAVE LARGER IMAGINATIONS THAN OTHERS.
MOVE IT, BALDY! THE KLINGON EXPRESS IS COMIN' THROUGH!
JASON, SCRAM! THIS IS MY DREAM!

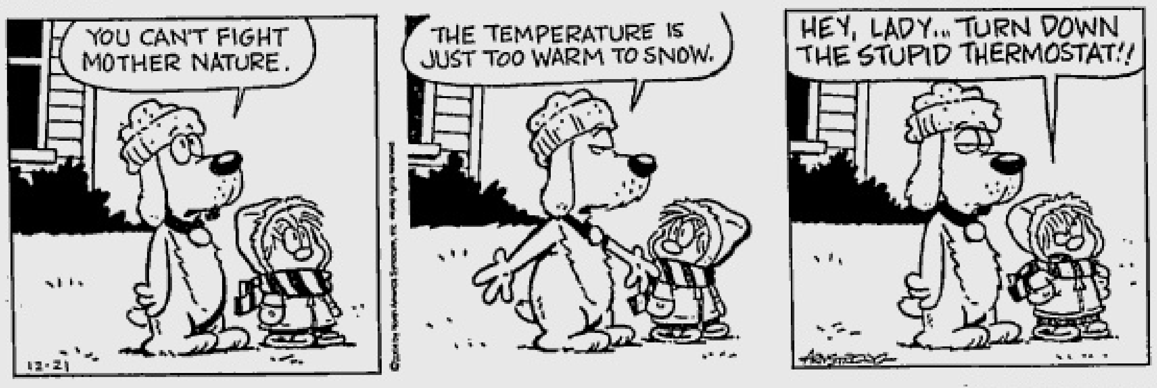
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


NO HOLIDAY PARTIES AT THE PALACE, BUT I WILL BE BRINGING CHEERS TO VICTIMS OF TYPHOONS
OWS?
PANO KAYA YUN?
BASTA SUMAMA KA!
THREE CHEERS FOR THE VICTIMS... HEP! HEP!
HOORAY!

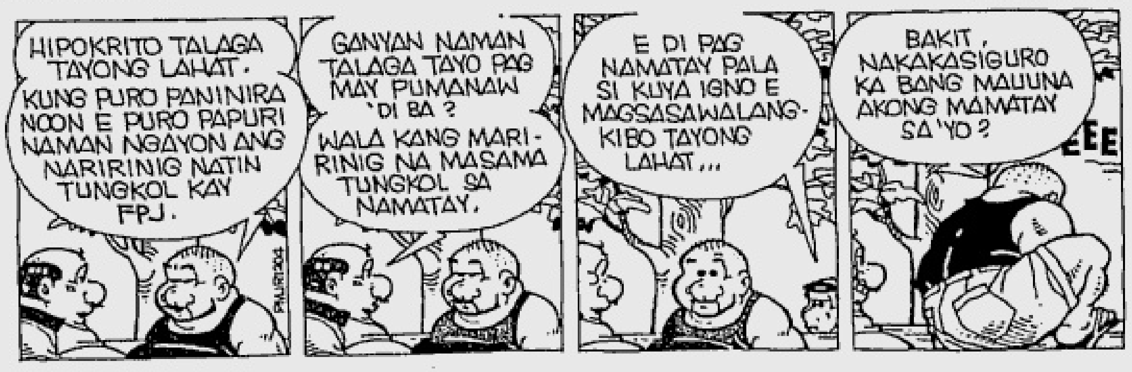
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


YOU CAN'T FIGHT MOTHER NATURE.
THE TEMPERATURE IS JUST TOO WARM TO SNOW.
HEY, LADY... TURN DOWN THE STUPID THERMOSTAT!!

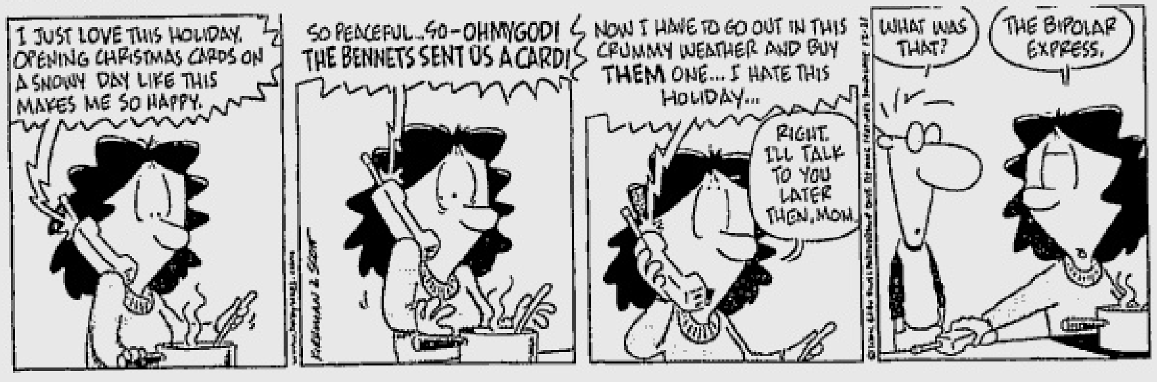
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


HIPOKRITO TALAGA TAYONG LAHAT.
KUNG PURO PANINIRA NOON E PURO PAPURI NAMAN NGAYON ANG NARIRINIG NATIN TUNGKOL KAY FPJ.
GANYAN NAMAN TALAGA TAYO PAG MAY PUMANAW 'DI BA?
WALA KANG MARIRINIG NA MASAMA TUNGKOL SA NAMATAY.
E DI PAG NAMATAY PALA SI KUYA IGNO E MAGSASAWALANG-KIBO TAYONG LAHAT...
BAKIT, NAKAKASIGURO KA BANG MAUUNA AKONG MAMATAY SA 'YO?
EEE

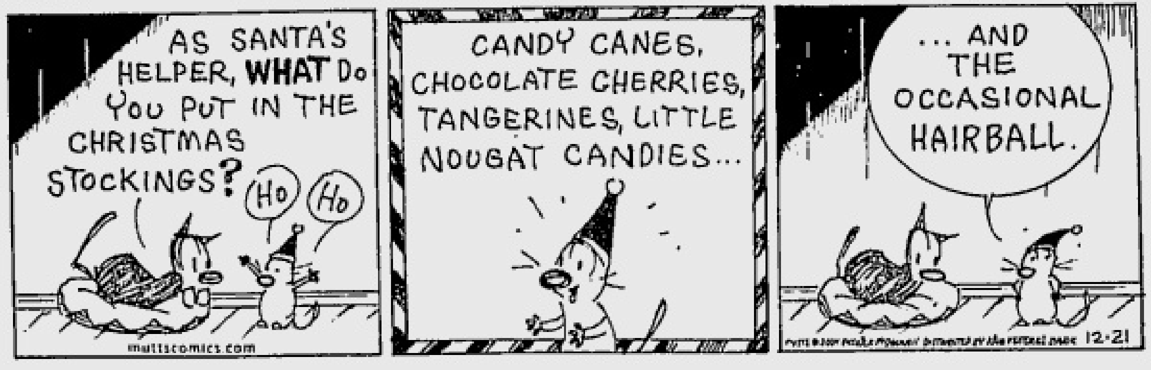
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


I JUST LOVE THIS HOLIDAY. OPENING CHRISTMAS CARDS ON A SNOWY DAY LIKE THIS MAKES ME SO HAPPY.
SO PEACEFUL... SO-OHMYGOD! THE BENNETS SENT US A CARD!
NOW I HAVE TO GO OUT IN THIS CRUMMY WEATHER AND BUY THEM ONE... I HATE THIS HOLIDAY...
RIGHT. I'LL TALK TO YOU LATER THEN, MOM.
WHAT WAS THAT?
THE BIPOLAR EXPRESS.

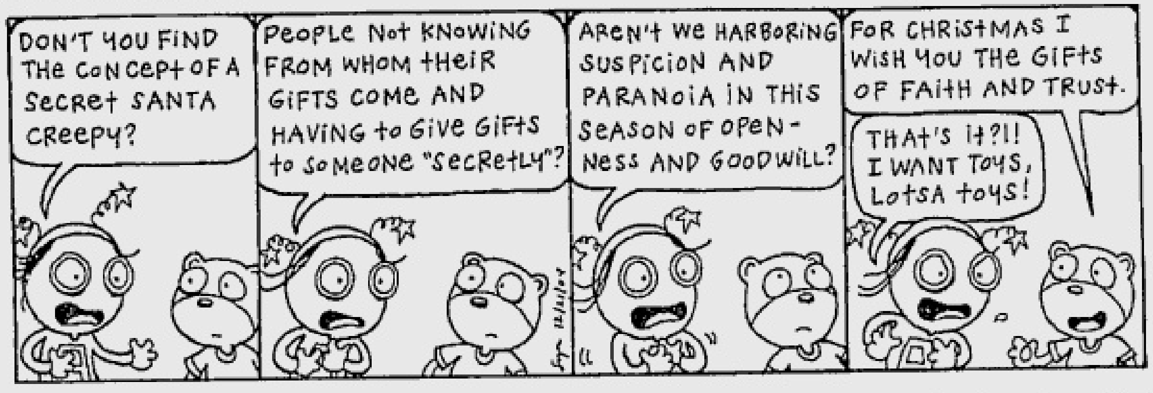
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


AS SANTA'S HELPER, WHAT DO YOU PUT IN THE CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS?
HO
HO
CANDY CANES, CHOCOLATE CHERRIES, TANGERINES, LITTLE NOUGAT CANDIES...
... AND THE OCCASIONAL HAIRBALL.
muttscomics.com

ATOMO AND WEBOY

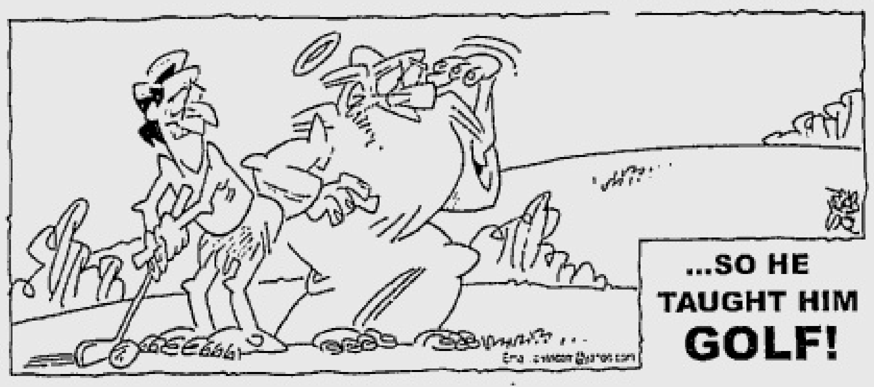
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


DON'T YOU FIND THE CONCEPT OF A SECRET SANTA CREEPY?
PEOPLE NOT KNOWING FROM WHOM THEIR GIFTS COME AND HAVING TO GIVE GIFTS TO SOMEONE "SECRETLY"?
AREN'T WE HARBORING SUSPICION AND PARANOIA IN THIS SEASON OF OPENNESS AND GOODWILL?
FOR CHRISTMAS I WISH YOU THE GIFTS OF FAITH AND TRUST.
THAT'S IT?!! I WANT TOYS, LOTSA TOYS!

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

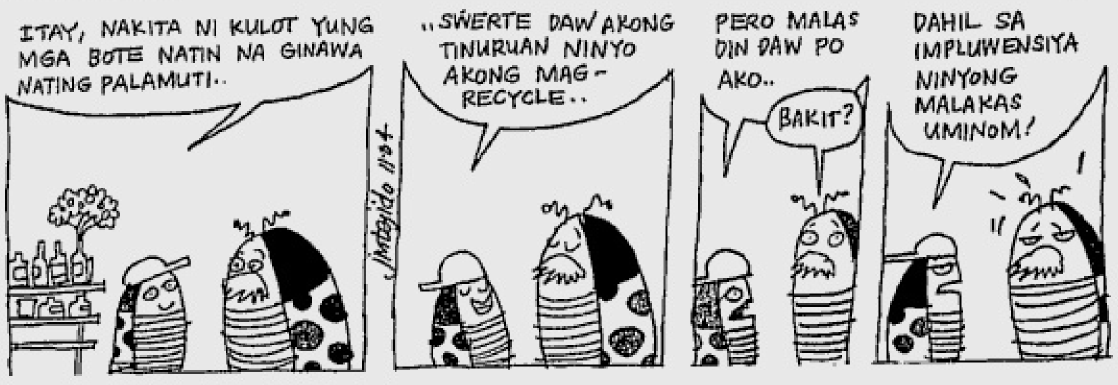
MAN WAS SAD AND BORED IN THE GARDEN. GOD SAW IT WAS NOT GOOD FOR MAN TO BE ALONE.



...SO HE TAUGHT HIM GOLF!

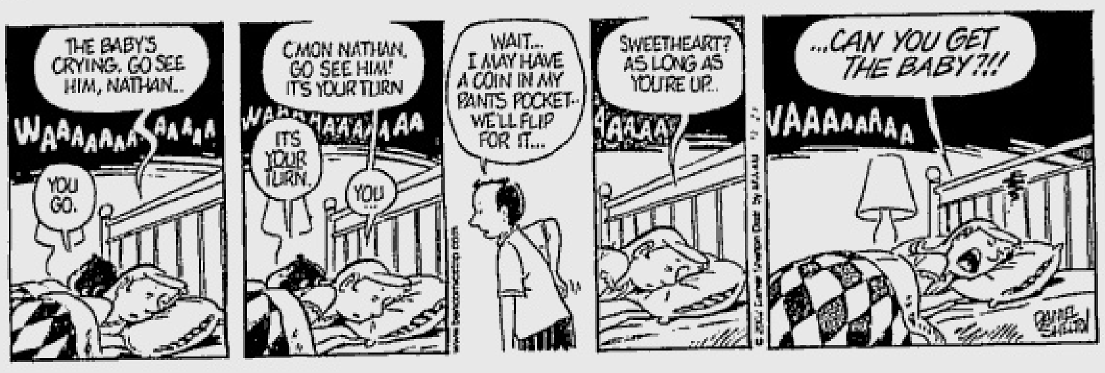
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ITAY, NAKITA NI KULOT YUNG MGA BOTE NATIN NA GINAWA NATING PALAMUTI..
..SWERTE DAW AKONG TINURUAN NINYO AKONG MAG-RECYCLE..
PERO MALAS DIN DAW PO AKO..
BAKIT?
DAHIL SA IMPLUWENSIYA NINYONG MALAKAS UMINOM!

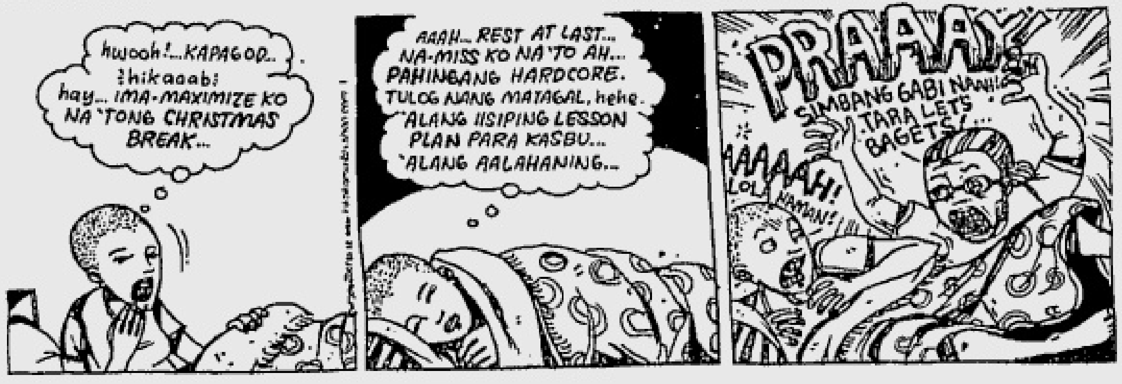
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


THE BABY'S CRYING. GO SEE HIM, NATHAN..
WAAAAAAAAAAAA
YOU GO.
C'MON NATHAN. GO SEE HIM! IT'S YOUR TURN
ITS YOUR TURN.
YOU
WAIT... I MAY HAVE A COIN IN MY PANTS POCKET.. WE'LL FLIP FOR IT...
SWEETHEART? AS LONG AS YOU'RE UP..
...CAN YOU GET THE BABY?!!
VAAAAAAAA

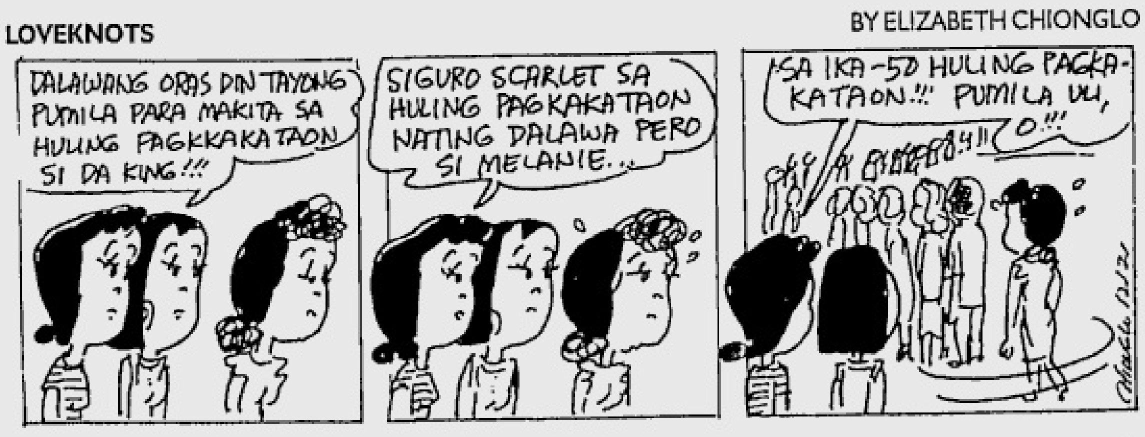
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


hwooh!...KAPAGOD.. :hikaaab! hay... IMA-MAXIMIZE KO NA 'TONG CHRISTMAS BREAK...
AAAH... REST AT LAST... NA-MISS KO NA 'TO AH... PAHINGANG HARDCORE. TULOG NANG MATAGAL, hehe. 'ALANG IISIPING LESSON PLAN PARA KASBU... 'ALANG AALAHANING...
PRAAAAY!
SIMBANG GABI NA!! TARA LETS BAGETS!...
AAAAAH! LOLA NAMAN!

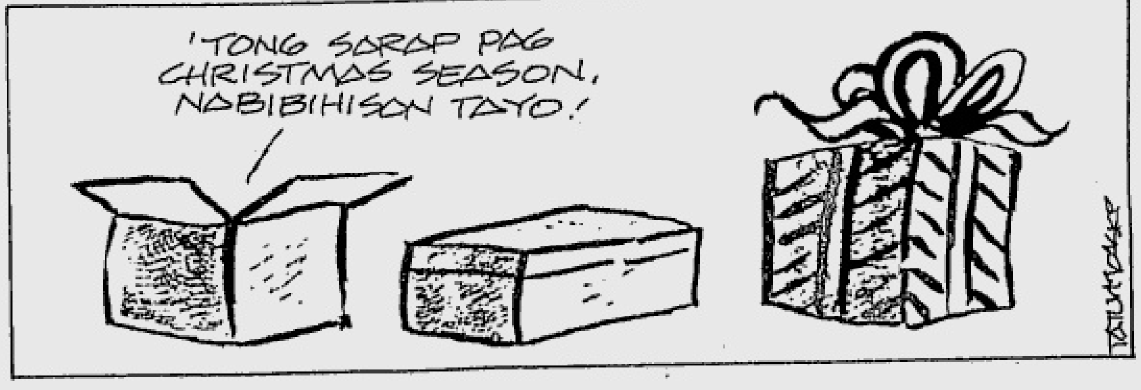
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


DALAWANG ORAS DIN TAYONG PUMILA PARA MAKITA SA HULING PAGKAKATAON SI DA KING!!!
SIGURO SCARLET SA HULING PAGKAKATAON NATING DALAWA PERO SI MELANIE...
SA IKA-50 HULING PAGKAKATAON!!! PUMILA ULI, O!!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


'TONG SARAP PAG CHRISTMAS SEASON, NABIBIHISAN TAYO!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are strong-willed and purposeful. You know the power of when to speak and when to remain silent. This means your strength is both verbal and nonverbal. You are private by nature. You love children and animals and are appalled by cruelty to them. Work hard this coming year for rewards in 2006. **Birthdate of:** Samuel L. Jackson, actor; Ray Romano, actor; Kiefer Sutherland, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You might be singled out for extra responsibilities in the next few weeks. If so, accept whatever you are asked to do. You'll do well!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You have an increasing desire to expand your horizons through travel or education. The next few weeks are the perfect time to take courses or go back to school.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You might be faced with having to deal with somebody else's values. The problem is that you do not agree with these values. You have to try to find a common meeting ground.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You can expect to focus on partners and close friends much more in the next few weeks. This gives you a good chance to learn more about how you relate to everyone.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Tackle any project that appeals to you now, because you have the energy to organize yourself better both at work and at home. Fortunately, this wonderful urge will stay with you for the next month!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You might be more involved with children in the immediate future. Everything having to do with the arts, the entertainment world, show business and professional sports appeals to you now. Party on!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Home and family become more important to you now. Reunions, family visits and exchanges with relatives all require your time.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Fasten your seat belts! The next six weeks are busy! Short trips, errands and conversations with siblings and relatives, plus increased buying and selling, keep you on the run.

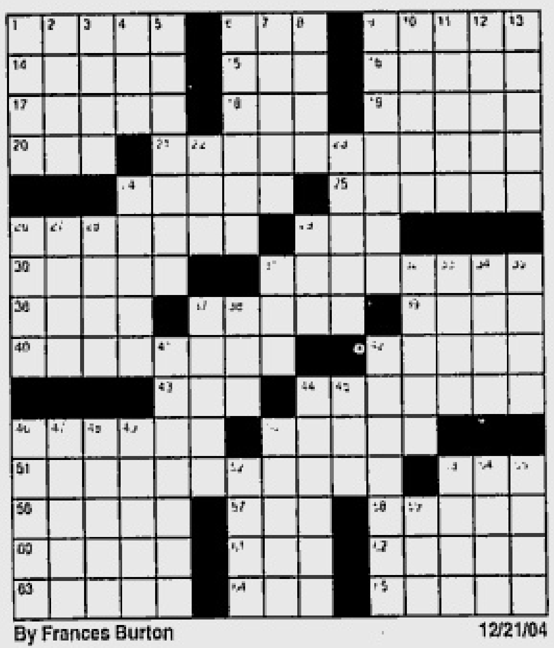
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You like to dream up get-rich-quick schemes. And sometimes they work! In the next few weeks, your focus on moneymaking ideas is quite strong. Who knows what will happen?

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Today the Sun moves into your sign, bringing you energy, vigor and better health. It's your turn to recharge your batteries for the rest of the year!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Try to get as much rest and relaxation as you can in the next few weeks. Work behind the scenes, if you can. You need some downtime.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Make plans for a popular, social month ahead. Talk to friends about your hopes and dreams for the future.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Frances Burton
Summerville, GA

12/21/04

ACROSS
1 Nile dam
6 Trajectory
9 Father of psychoanalysis
14 Santiago's land
15 Crooner Torme
16 No-man's land
17 Freshen up
18 Actress Arthur
19 Merger
20 Harris and O'Neill
21 Sound of a womanizer
24 Exposes
25 "__ Fideles"
26 Neck wraps
29 Wallach of "Lord Jim"
30 Clarinetist Shaw
31 Sounds of derision
36 Poet Teasdale
37 Haley book
39 Han Solo's love
40 Sound of departure
42 Small bays
43 Veneration
44 Dry white wine
46 Make
50 U.S. family of artists
51 Sounds of the stable?
53 Bleacher cheer
56 Get up!
57 Harper Valley grp. of song
58 Picture in one's mind
60 Like Cheerios
61 Knight's title
62 Inciter
63 "The __ of Kilimanjaro"
64 Finish
65 Framework posts

DOWN
1 Farm plot
2 Small outbuilding
3 Victories
4 Pub. choice
5 Avant-garde movement
6 Walks leisurely
7 Coral creations
8 Hammer type
9 Amorphous
10 Dishwasher cycle
11 Gives out
12 Letter-shaped fastener
13 Recipient
22 Smelter input
23 Stoppages
24 Ross or Mulroney
26 Insolent rejoinder
27 Crop of a bird
28 Razor choice
29 Take in food
31 Gear feature
32 Without support
33 Jeans-maker Strauss
34 Deliberate misstatements
35 Window element
37 Spur wheel
38 Indivisible
41 Shiny fabrics
42 Temperature scale
44 Look at
45 Expression of derision
46 Disorder to the max
47 Comic Atkinson
48 Muse of poetry
49 Out of kilter
50 Russian president
52 Church section
53 Prego rival
54 Added years
55 Towel ID
59 A-Team member

Monday's Puzzle Solved

B	U	S	H	■	S	T	E	A	M	■	T	S	A	R
A	C	N	E	■	P	A	R	S	E	■	O	K	R	A
C	L	O	W	N	A	R	O	U	N	D	W	I	T	H
H	A	W	■	E	R	N	S	■	■	R	E	N	F	S
■	■	■	P	U	S	S	■	S	C	A	R	F	■	■
S	A	F	I	R	E	■	S	I	A	M	■	L	A	P
A	L	A	N	A	■	M	I	T	T	■	V	I	S	A
T	I	C	K	L	E	O	N	E	S	F	A	N	C	Y
Y	V	E	S	■	R	U	G	S	■	E	L	T	O	N
R	E	P	■	B	A	S	F	■	T	R	I	S	T	E
■	■	L	E	A	S	E	■	C	A	R	D	■	■	■
A	M	A	S	S	■	■	P	A	S	O	■	S	A	T
G	E	T	T	H	E	L	A	S	T	L	A	U	G	H
A	G	E	E	■	W	A	S	T	E	■	S	M	E	E
S	A	S	E	■	E	S	T	E	R	■	H	O	R	N

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12/21/04

Is sleep paralysis like alien abduction?

Part 2

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

IN HER letter, Eileen R. Santos of Mandaluyong City said, "My experiences with sleep paralysis have always been very frightening. In the middle of my sleep I suddenly wake up... paralyzed. I could not move my body and when I try to scream, nothing comes out of my mouth. Then I hear a buzzing noise, most of the time an eerie voice calling my name.

"I see and feel the presence of a dark shadow near my bed, and my chest is so heavy, as if someone is sitting on it. There is always a feeling of evil descending upon me whenever an episode occurs. It happens once or twice a month. If I'm lucky three or four months will pass before it happens again."

The experiences indicate you really go out of your body. These are typical characteristics of astral projection. Your feeling and seeing a dark shadowy figure and the heaviness on your chest suggest a possible attempt at possession by an evil spirit.

Are there spirit manifestations in your house? If so, you may need to have it cleansed or exorcized.

The buzzing sound is often heard by people whose astral body leaves the physical body. Sometimes they hear and feel the astral wind. Sometimes a popping sound is heard indicating the astral body's detaching from the physical body.

If you don't panic, nothing really bad happens. It becomes more difficult if you get frightened and struggle to get back into your physical body. You will return naturally if you keep calm.

Interesting to researchers

"It is these cases which have no relation to narcolepsy that are of particular interest to researchers of OOBE (out-of-body experience) who have established that sleep paralysis is a sensation that sometimes accompanies the separation of the astral body from the physical.

"The technical term for this sensation of not being able to move the body, when related to OOBE, is projective catalepsy. It is a benign phenomenon that even has the potential to catalyze one's extra sensory perception."

The above observation is correct. But this is the first time I've heard of astral projection called projective catalepsy.

Alien abduction?

"Al Cheyne, associate scholar of psychology at the University of Waterloo, Canada, said in a survey involving more than 2,000 people identified as experiencing sleep paralysis, hundreds described experiences similar to alien abduction.

"A sensed presence, vague gibberish spoken in one's ear, shadowy creatures moving about the room, a strange immobility, a crushing pressure and painful sensations on various parts of the body—these were compatible not just with an assault by primitive demons, but also with probing alien experimenters, Cheyne said. And the sensations of floating and flying account for reports of levitation and transport to alien vessels."

This is the first time I've heard OOBE associated with alien abductions. In my experience with people who have had OOBE, I've come across only one or two who reported being taken to an alien spaceship. This is not common in the Philippines. I do not think we should confuse simple astral projection with alien abduction.

"Erich Weilhrauch, a victim of sleep paralysis and who did his own research on it, said, 'sleep paralysis seems to be extremely common among people (with) psychic abilities. This does not mean you have to be able to predict the future, or read minds to have this happen to you. What I mean is around 95 percent of people who go through sleep paralysis are those who can feel presences, communicate with life beyond the living realm, see into the future, or even those who just get random glimpses of impending doom in their minds. No one in my family has ever experienced it upon asking.' "

I agree with this observation. I find those who experienced astral projection, not necessarily with sleep paralysis, are sensitive to psychic forces.

"I myself," concludes Eileen, "would like to believe that sleep paralysis is just a medical condition, a sleep disorder. I have not sought any medical or professional help. I am not even comfortable discussing this with friends and loved ones, because of the frightening experiences associated with it.

"I related this experience once or twice to a friend, who freaked out, especially when I mentioned the eerie voices, the disconnection of my body from my spirit.

"I do believe I have a special gift, although I don't dwell too much on this. I do hear voices, most of the time calling my name, even if I am awake. I do feel the presence of someone even when I am alone. When I think of someone, the phone or door bell suddenly rings (and the) caller or visitor (is) the very person I am thinking of."

As you quoted from the research, "Sleep paralysis (or what is really an OOBE) is experienced by people (with) some psychic abilities." It is obvious to me that you have some telepathic, clairvoyant, clairsentient, clairdient and precognitive abilities.

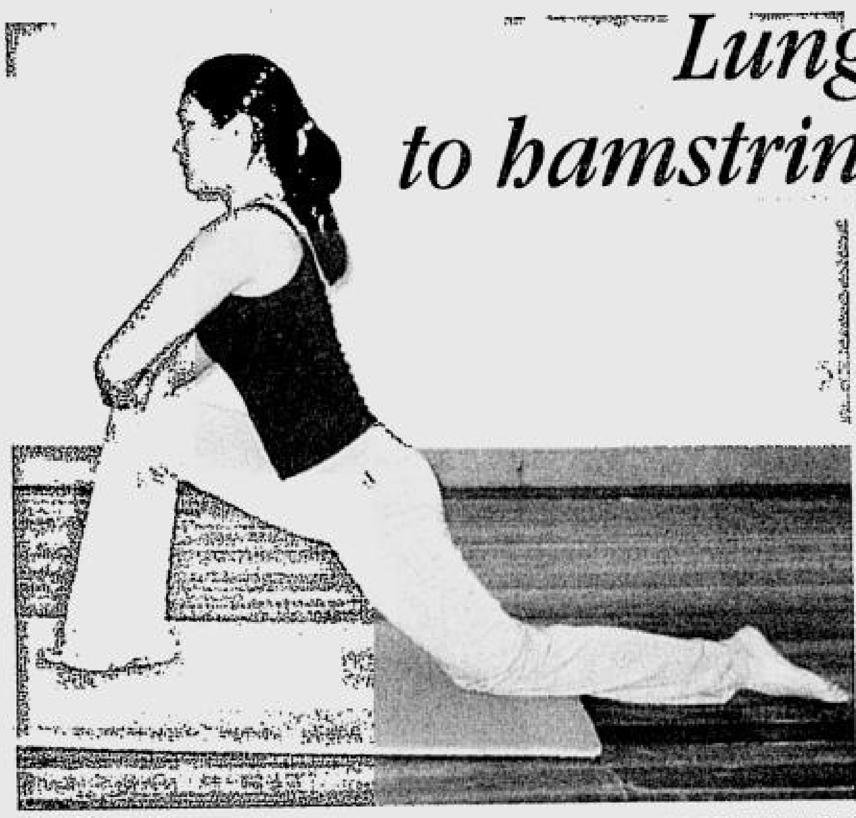
Your fears are caused mainly by the novelty of the experience for which there is no rational explanation. The unknown is usually frightening to people.

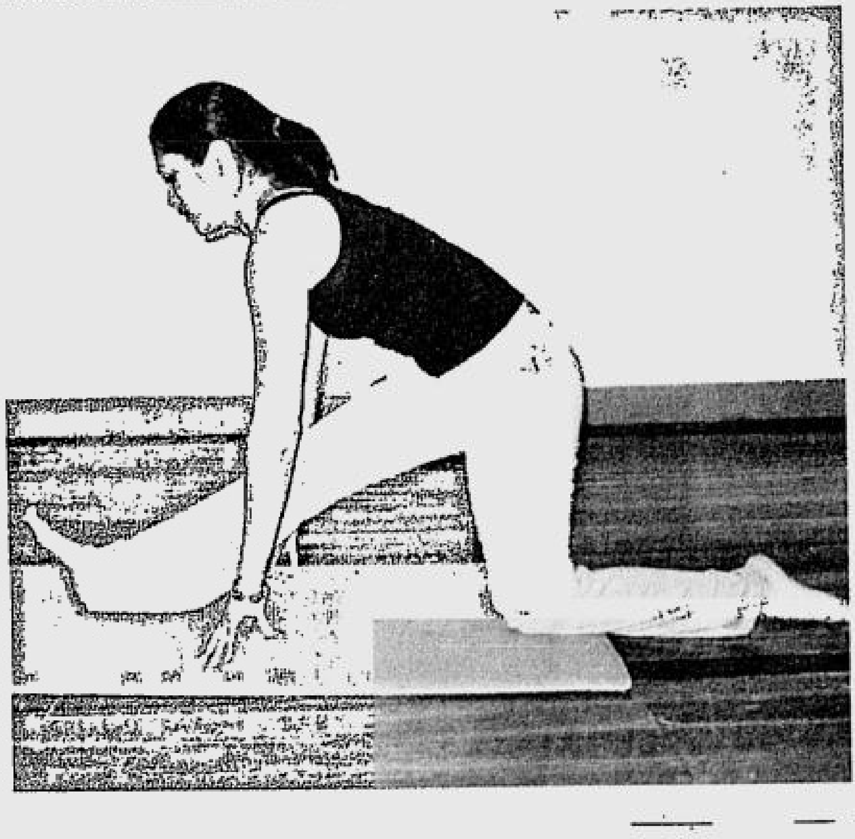
Once you understand the nature of astral and spiritual planes, your fear will disappear and you will develop coping strategies. I have not met someone who experienced any harmful effect of sleep paralysis.

Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legazpi St., Legazpi Village, Makati. Call 8107245 or 8926806. E-mail jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit http://jlicauco.shorturl.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program 7-8 p.m., every Sunday.

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Lunge to hamstring stretch





IN THE LUNGE position, the front of the hips and thighs are stretched, while in the hamstring position, the back of the thighs are being stretched.

Equipment:

Exercise mat

Exercise technique:

1. Get on your hands and knees.
2. Place your left foot beside your left hand. Move your right knee backward until you feel a stretch in the front of the thigh.
3. Keep your hands on the floor and lift your chest or place your forearms on your thigh.
4. Hold for 10-15 seconds.
5. Then straighten your left leg, press your buttocks backward, lean forward from the hip joint and place your hands on the mat.
6. Hold for 10-15 seconds.
7. Repeat if you want.

Performance tips:

1. In the lunge position, keep your knee in line with your ankle. If your knee is too far forward, move your other leg backward some more until your knee lines up with ankle.
2. In the hamstring position, lean forward from the hip joint as far as you can, then allow your back to round. Keep your foot flexed.

Repetitions:

Do one to three times.

PANTENE
PRO-V
shampoo
NEW
SMOOTH & SILKY
PANTENE
PRO-V
conditioner
NEW
SMOOTH & SILKY
PANTENE
PRO-V
HAIR FALL CONTROL SHAMPOO
NEW
PANTENE
PRO-V
HAIR FALL CONTROL CONDITIONER
NEW

ASIAN women's favorite scents differ from those of their European and American counterparts

Made-to-order for the Asian woman

PROCTER & Gamble has developed a new fragrance for the Pantene Pro-V haircare range specifically developed for Asian women.

Intensive research conducted by its global unit established that the scent preferences of Asian consumers, especially women, were different from those of Europeans and Americans.

The study also found that in many Asian countries, a product's scent was a key factor in consumers' decision whether or not to buy a product.

Asian customers tended to favor soft, sensual fragrances with exotic and rare ingredients.

This led to the formulation of the new scent "Asian Zest," now being introduced in the new Pantene Amino Pro-V Complex. The scent uses fruity, citrusy notes such as lemon, lime, mandarin, exotic star fruit, Asian pear, and mangoes.

White Madonna lilies are used in the heart notes while the base notes smell of sandalwood and clear woods.

Asian Zest aims to personify the aura of the Pantene Asian woman—natural, confident, approachable and friendly.

SAY GOODBYE TO DARK SCAR FOREVER!
T (02) 4118319
T (02) 4143082
09173787955

Treadmill buying guide

From page D1

from a preset program to manual mode and vice-versa without starting all over again.

Heart rate monitoring

If your doctor wants you to exercise at a specific intensity or you just want to know if your heart is working at the appropriate range, then you need some way of monitoring your heart rate.

The cheapest way is by manually feeling for your pulse at the side of your neck or at your wrist and counting the number of beats you feel for ten seconds then multiplying that by six. However, this is not easy to do when you are walking or running.

It is better to use a heart rate monitor consisting of a chest strap that picks up your heart beat and a wristwatch receiver that displays the results. Some machines will show the results on the console's display panel.

Other machines have hand sensors that you hold a few seconds to have your heart rate displayed on the console.

In all these cases, you still have to adjust manually the treadmill's speed or incline to stay within your target heart rate. If you don't want the hassle, then get a more expensive machine with an interactive heart rate control. The machine will automatically control the speed and incline to match the heart rate range you set.

Ear-clip heart rate monitors that come with lower-end treadmills are 40 percent less accurate than the chest strap models.

Safety features

A treadmill's powerful motor can unceremoniously throw you off if you are not careful so an emergency shut-off system is very important.

The treadmill should have a magnetic key plugged into the console, which is connected to a cord clipped to your clothes. If you are pulled backward, the cord yanks the key out making the treadmill stop automatically. Another option is an emergency stop button that should be prominently displayed on the console.

Put your treadmill at least 6-8 ft away from walls, windows or furniture so that if you are thrown off you won't slam into anything.

Side rails are helpful for balance and can make you feel secure that you won't fall to the side. But they should not get in the way of your swinging arms when you walk or run.

Foldable treadmills are great space-savers but make sure the safety latches are sturdy so they do not accidentally open after folding. The latch mechanism should not be within reach of small children.

And, speaking of children, a treadmill is not a toy. It is a powerful machine that can seriously hurt young children. Do not let children play with a treadmill.

Limited budget

If you have a limited budget, the barest minimum you should expect from a lower end treadmill is a stable steel frame, 1.5 continuous horsepower motor, a belt size of at least 18-20 inches wide and 48 inches long, speed range of 0.1-8 miles per hour, incline range of 0-10 percent, and a reliable dealer who will give your treadmill the tender loving care it needs to last a long time.

Sources: American College of Sports Medicine, Runner's World Magazine, and Better Homes & Gardens Treadmill Buying Guide.

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Dr. Nicky S. Montoya

Take Charge Doc! is your weekly question and answer guide on general health issues and illnesses. MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. And in a common thrust with the campaigns of the government, Take Charge Doc! parallels its features on the Calendar of Health Events of the Department of Health.

What is the emergency management for firecracker injuries?

Firecracker injuries result from two basic mechanisms. The first comes from the thermal energy emitted by the device which causes different degrees of thermal injury, usually involving the hands and face. The second, from the blast wave during explosion of which injuries can range from simple abrasions to lacerations, or even fractures. Minor burns, can be managed by soaking the affected area into cool, clean water or by applying soaked pads. Washing the affected area with soap and water may also be done especially for those with obvious contamination. Avoid applying substances like toothpastes and plant extracts. Instead, you can apply commercially available burn creams. Abrasions can be treated by simple washing with soap and water and applying topical antiseptic solutions. Injuries with more serious burns, lacerations or amputation are best treated at the hospital. Be sure to immobilize the affected limb with make-shift splints if you suspect a fracture and wrap the wound with clean pads on your way to the hospital. Do not attempt to manipulate suspected fractures yourselves.

This week's feature question is answered by the ER specialist of the University of Perpetual Help Medical Center, **Dr. Johnny R. Perez.** Dr. Perez, an affiliated provider of MEDICard since 2002, is a Medicine graduate of Davao Medical School Foundation. He took his training for Emergency Medicine at St. Luke's Medical Center. Doc John is a Diplomate of the Phil. Board of Emergency Medicine, a Fellow of the Phil. College of Emergency Medicine and Acute Care and members to the American College of Emergency Physicians and the Phil. Medical Association. Physically active Dr. Perez enjoys the sports basketball, badminton, table tennis, tennis and billiards during his leisure time. He also plays the guitar and drums and enjoys signing. Dr. Perez is married to physician Iris Cecille Domingo-Perez and is blessed with a daughter, Jean Andrea.

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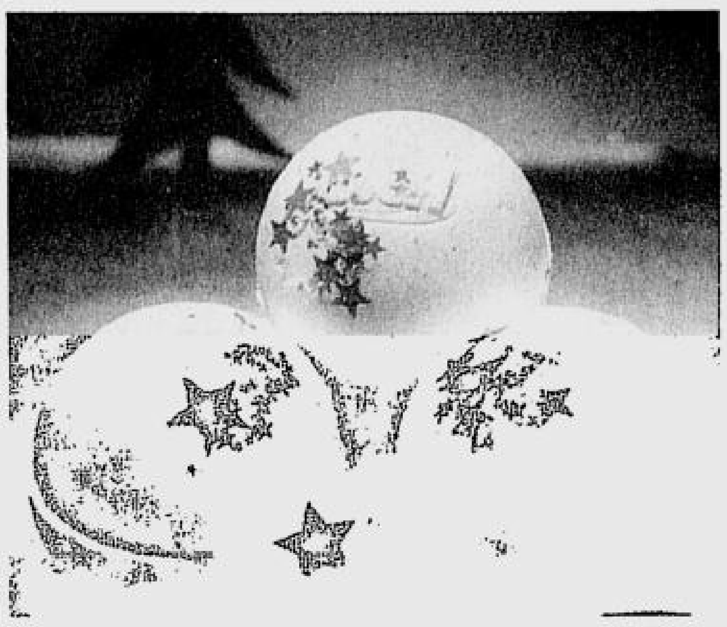

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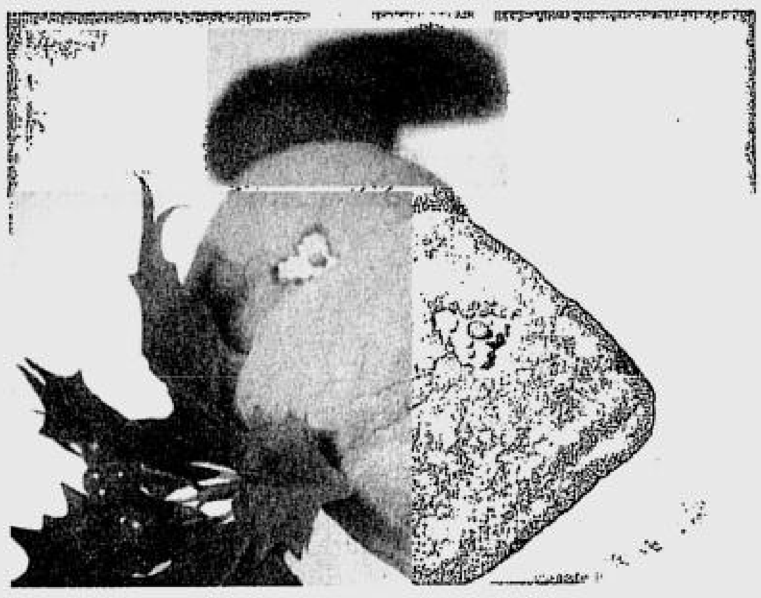

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Filipino moviegoers 'Asianized,' notes screenwriter

'CROUCHING TIGER' took Hollywood by storm.

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The local film industry is down on its knees, but a screenwriter says it could be worse.

Judging by entertainment trends in the past three years, local movies have bowed to Chinese and Japanese filmmakers, whose output have won much-coveted markets in the United States and Europe, says screenwriter Roy Iglesias.

The Taiwanese boy band F4's unexpected popularity in the Philippines and the welcome accorded Korean soap operas on television also suggest that the Filipino filmgoer's taste has become more "Asianized," Iglesias notes. The success of Iglesia's "Mano Po" series, about multiple generations of Chinese-Filipinos, clearly cemented this love affair with Asia.

"Mano Po 3" will be screened in Metro Manila, Baguio, Lucena, Davao and Cebu theaters starting Dec. 25, via the Metro Manila Film Festival.

Racial conscience

The Asian trend has vindicated alternative filmmaker Kidlat Tahimik, Iglesias believes.

'MANO PO' is the best proof of Asian 'renaissance' in RP movies.

Kidlat, an internationally renowned Baguio-based artist, has long been known to criticize mainstream Filipino cinema for its devotion to Hollywood formulas.

The independent filmmaker often advises young artists to listen to their *duwende* (dwarf). By *duwende*, Kidlat means a man's link to an indigenous racial memory.

It is an approximation, Kidlat earlier explained, of the racial conscience that leads artists to their cultural integrity or their cultural roots.

"Kidlat was correct all along," Iglesias points out, because Philippine cinema has been stripped of its Hollywood formulas in a subconscious "weeding-out" process dictated by the latest box-office returns.

Hardest hit

"From a high of 250 films, Filipino producers have been reduced to filming 30 movies this year," he says, adding that production of action films has been the hardest hit.

"Remember when our action films had the same exploding cars and leaping heroes like (the Bruce Willis' starrer) 'Die Hard'? Well, our audiences don't care for those anymore," Iglesias says.

Prominent action directors and action film crews have been seen milling around a small café in Metro Manila, waiting for projects that never come, he says. "There are no surefire formulas anymore. Now there's more experimentation, because [not even] big-name stars are necessarily box-office guarantees."

Iglesias insists this Asian renaissance in Philippine pop culture could not have prospered without Hollywood's nod. He says Asian cinema became acceptable in most parts of the world only after Hollywood cast modern Asian stereotypes in its movies.

"You remember that [Hong Kong superstar] Jackie Chan and even [2001 Oscar-winning film] "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" became popular, not because they were kung fu movies, but because Hollywood loved them," he says.

Both Chan and period kung fu movies from Hong Kong and Taiwan were popu-

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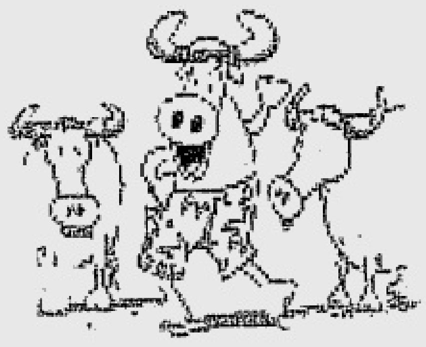

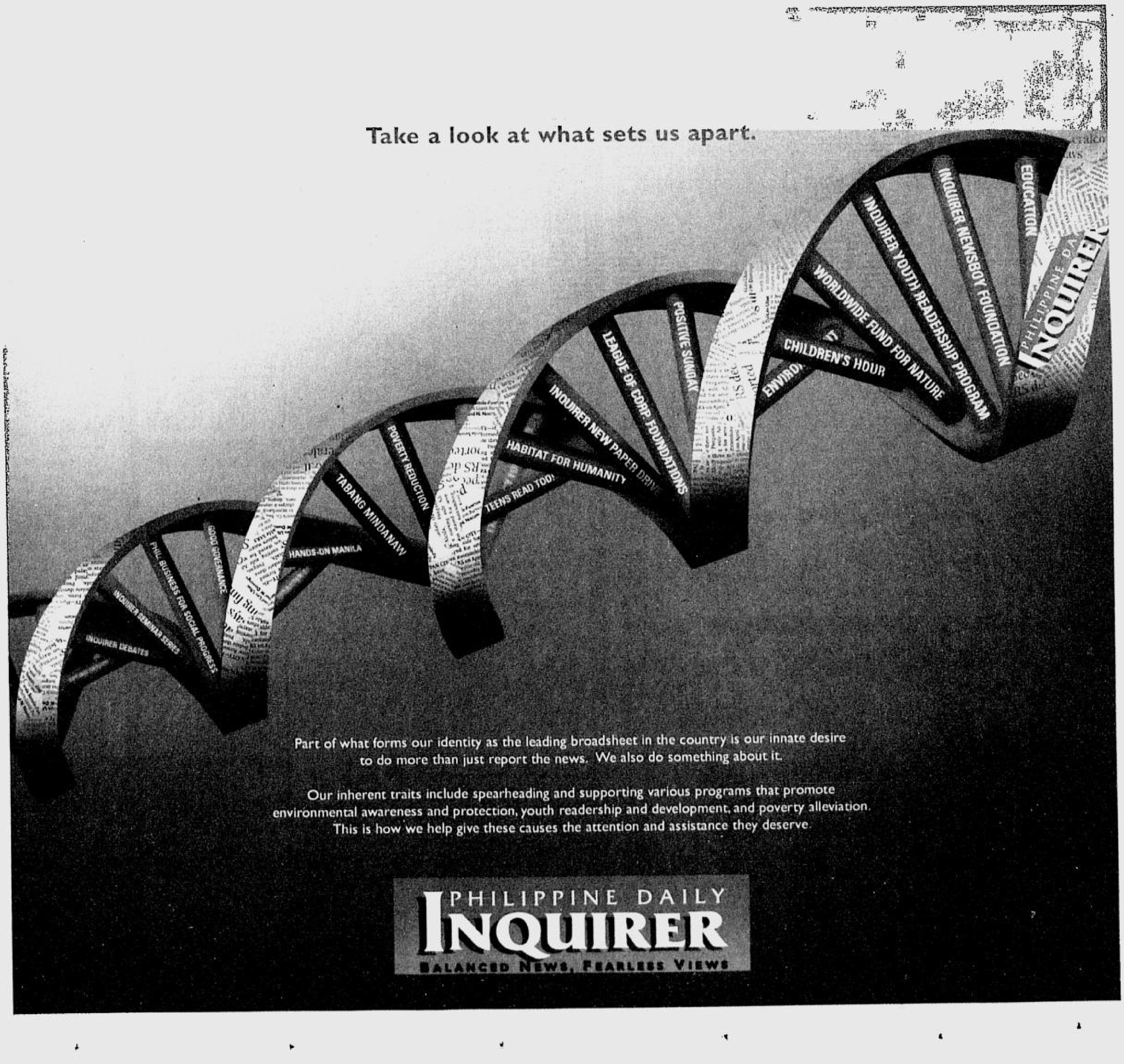

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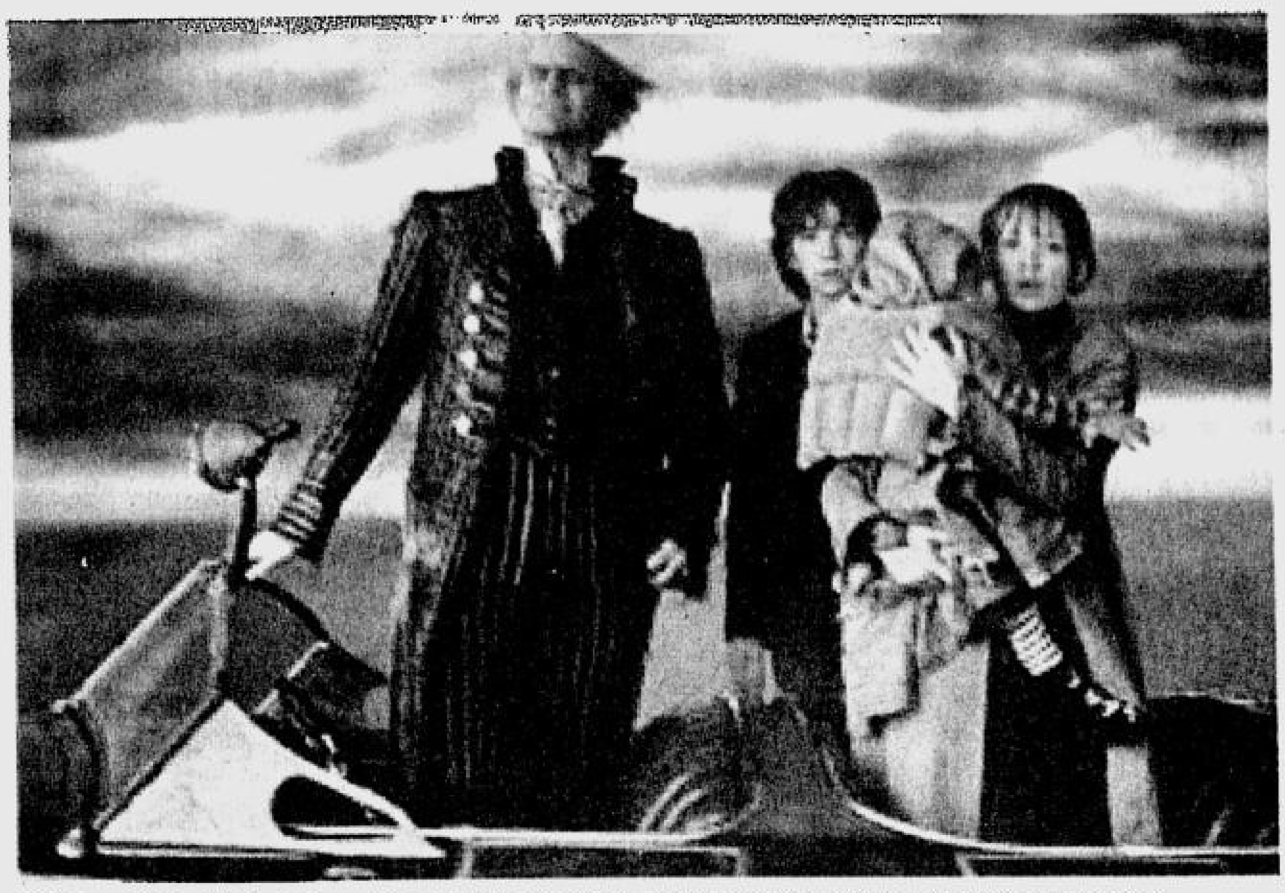

JIM Carey (left) with Emily Browning and Liam Aiken in 'Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events'

As bad luck would have it, quirky author toppled Harry Potter in NY

LOS ANGELES—An unfortunate event befell the mysterious author Lemony Snicket on the way to Hollywood.

Despite doing everything in his literary power to prevent ingenious orphans and other children from reading his tales of misery and woe, his "Series of Unfortunate Events" went to the top of global best-seller lists.

As bad luck would have it—and there is plenty in the quirky, subversive tales of the three Baudelaire siblings—the events of the first three books have been turned into an alarming cinematic event featuring fires, leeches, giant snakes and other forms of extreme unpleasantness.

All of which goes to prove that there is more to children's popular culture than a certain British boy wizard, and that stories with unhappy endings, repulsive villains and itchy clothing still have a horrible habit of capturing the attention of young readers.

"Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events", starring Jim Carrey, Meryl Streep and Jude Law, opens in cinemas in the United States on Dec. 17 and Australia and much of Europe the following week, just in time to take the pesky hope and cheer out of the holiday season.

No one could be more surprised than Lemony Snicket, sometimes known as the seriously self-deprecating American writer Daniel Handler, who claims it has all been a terrible mistake.

"I am existing in a continuing state of befuddlement that anyone would be interested in these kinds of stories. I was completely amazed that a publisher was interested... So I just thought the film company had lost its mind," Snicket/Handler told reporters.

Bad beginning

While J.K. Rowling's "Harry Potter" books and movies were famously setting bookstore and box office tills ringing around the world, the 11 books in Lemony Snicket's "Series of Unfortunate Events" were steadily being translated into 39 languages and selling 27 million copies worldwide.

They were the first books to knock the Harry Potter series off the top of the New York Times bestseller list. When the 11th book, "The Grim Grotto," was published in September, it was for a while the best-selling book in the United States.

The audience for the books was driven by children rather than well-meaning parents despite the fact that the Baudelaire siblings are orphaned in the very first chapter and have to rely not on wands or magic but on their own wits to survive.

The movie, eight months and 70 different Hollywood sets in the making, is a visual feast that makes no apologies for illuminating the dark side of life and sprinkling it with subversive humor.

Atrocious author

Author Handler has proved so elusive that his identity has intrigued readers as much as the sophisticated language used in the books and the author's repeated pleas to "read something else!" Handler, a boyish 34-year-old who describes himself as the class clown at school, thought it would be fun back in 1999 to publish under a pseudonym after having written two little-known novels for adults.

The mystery is sustained on the Lemony Snicket Web site and even a succession of author appearances and book signings have failed to turn him into a household name.

"I just told children I was there instead of Lemony Snicket," he said. "Children are lied to by adults almost constantly, so I don't think it was an unusual experience for them." *Reuters*

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Filipino moviegoers 'Asianized' . . .

From page 1

lar in the Philippines 20 to 30 years ago, Iglesias recalls, until Hollywood rediscovered them for a more global audience.

"[Even producer] Vic del Rosario [of Viva Films] was sure 'Mano Po' would be a hit because [US-based Taiwanese director] Ang Lee's 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon' scored in Hollywood," Iglesias says.

Which all goes to show, he reiterates, that local producers are at last getting Kidlat's point.

Asian movies that became hits abroad were more commercial than art house productions, relying on cultural dynamics and eccentricities.

Japan's "The Grudge" and "The Ring" were commercial ventures adapted to US audiences, yet they retained Japanese humor and sensibilities, Iglesias says.

On the other hand, he says, the overseas market for Filipino films was reached through a window that the late filmmaker Lino Brocka opened in various international film festivals through international awards that attracted a cult following abroad.

"Gagamboy," a past MMFF entry, sold very well in Japan as a Spiderman parody, Iglesias says. And when Viva Films started a division devoted to straight-to-home-video production, he says, the company was eyeing the Asian market. Also, television networks have been selling mini-series productions to counterparts in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, where they have drawn a sizeable audience.

Regal Films, which produced the "Mano Po" series, is also looking at an Asian market.

Outside of the region, producers are still scared, according to Iglesias. "You tell Mother Lily [Monteverde, of Regal] that a producer in Toronto is interested in 'Mano Po,' then ask if she can send copies, and for sure she'll say, '*Baka ma-pirate lang*.'"

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① NATIONAL TREASURE
FS 11:20AM, 2:00PM, 4:40PM, 7:20PM, LMF 10:00PM (GP)

② BRIDGET JONES (EDGE OF REASON)
FS 11:45AM, 2:15PM, 4:45PM, 7:15PM, LMF 9:45PM (PG-13)

③ POLAR EXPRESS
FS 11:30AM, 4:30PM, LMF 9:30PM (GP)
SHREK 2
FS 2:00PM, LMF 7:00PM (GP)

④ ALEXANDER
FS 12:15PM, 3:30PM, 6:45PM
LMF 10:00PM (R-13)

PREMIERE THEATRE
THE INCREDIBLES (GP)
FS 11:30AM, 2:00PM, 4:30PM, 7:00PM, LMF 9:30PM

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Araneta Center LEISURE GUIDE

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Gateway Cineplex*10
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NOW OPEN!

1 HAROLD AND KUMAR
1:40 4:20 7:00 9:40

2 NATIONAL TREASURE
12:25 3:10 5:55 8:40

3 ALEXANDER
12:30 3:30 6:30 9:30

4 BRIDGET JONES
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

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ALL THEATERS EQUIPPED WITH DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

ALI MALL CINEMAS

3 Dolby ALEXANDER
12:00 2:50 5:40 8:30

4 SDDS HAROLD & KUMAR
1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00

5 dts BAD SANTA
12:15 2:25 4:35 6:45 8:55

6 Dolby HONEY
12:15 2:25 4:35 6:45 8:55

7 Dolby BCUZ OF U
12:00 2:10 4:20 6:30 8:40

ARANETA COLISEUM

Disney On Ice
PRINCESS CLASSICS
SHOWTIME

Dec. 25 Sat 1pm 4:30pm 8pm
Dec. 26 Sun 2pm 6pm
Dec. 27 Mon 2pm 6pm
Dec. 28 Tue 6pm
Dec. 29 Wed 2pm 6pm
Dec. 30 Thu 2pm 6pm
Jan. 1 Sat 1pm 4:30pm 8pm
Jan. 2 Sun 2pm 6pm
Jan. 3 Mon 6pm

For tickets, call TicketNet at 911-5555

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY - LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	SALAT SA LIGAYA
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	SALAT SA LIGAYA
B	CLOSED
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA 1,2,3 & 4	NATIONAL TREASURE / BRIDGET JONES / SPIDERMAN 2 / SHREK 2
PREMIERE THEATRE	THE INCREDIBLES
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	KALABIT
CINEMA-2	SALAT
CINEMA-3	ONE MISSED CALL
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	POLAR EXPRESS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-6	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-7	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-8	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HAROLD & KUMAR
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	ALEXANDER
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	BAD SANTA
CINEMA-12	NATIONAL TREASURE
CINEMA-14	HONEY
CINEMA-15	BCUZ OF U
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PIÑAS)	NATIONAL TREASURE
CINEMA-1	PASIYAM
CINEMA-2	BRIDGET JONES
CINEMA-4	POLAR EXPRESS
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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GALLERIA 632-9115/16

1 ALEXANDER • THX
11:30 3:00 6:30 10:00
2 HAROLD AND KUMAR
11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00
3 NED KELLY
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
4 BRIDGET JONES 2
12:10 2:40 5:10 7:40 10:00
5 BIRTH
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
6 NATIONAL TREASURE
11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00
7 SHREK 2
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
8 HONEY
11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00
9 BAD SANTA
11:35 1:40 3:45 5:50 7:55 10:00
10 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 NATIONAL TREASURE 10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
2 BAD SANTA
10:15 12:15 2:15 4:20 6:25 6:30 10:00
3 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON
10:15 12:15 2:15 4:20 6:25 8:30 10:00
4 PA-SIYAM
10:35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50
5 RESERVE
6 HONEY
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
7 HAROLD AND KUMAR
10:20 12:15 2:10 4:05 6:00 7:55 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193/99 • 682-8280

1 SEED OF CHUCKY
10:50 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
2 ALEXANDER
12:30 3:30 6:30 9:30
3 SHREK 2 11:50 1:45
BRIDGET JONES 2 3:55 6:25 9:00
4 THE POLAR EXPRESS 10:50 12:50 2:50
2046 4:50 7:05 9:20
5 HONEY
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10
6 NATIONAL TREASURE
12:20 3:15 6:10 9:05
7 HAROLD AND KUMAR
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10
8 BAD SANTA
11:10 1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10

NOVALICHES 935-3229/31

1 ALEXANDER
10:40 1:50 5:00 8:15
2 NATIONAL TREASURE
10:30 1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30
3 BIRTH
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55
4 THE POLAR EXPRESS 10:30 12:30 2:30
2046 4:35 6:50 9:00
5 THE INCREDIBLES 11:00 1:10
ONE MISSED CALL 3:30 5:50 8:30
6 SHREK 2
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 6:50 8:30
7 SEED OF CHUCKY
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55
8 NANG NAK
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55

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11:00 2:20 5:40 9:00
2 SHREK 2
11:10 1:05 3:00 4:55 6:50 8:45
3 NATIONAL TREASURE
12:40 3:20 6:00 8:40
4 BAD SANTA
10:35 12:40 2:45 4:50 6:55 9:00

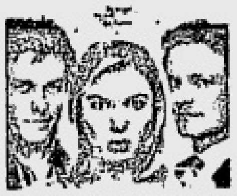
Citisquare MALABON 288-0985 / 2575

1 BCUZ OF U
11:10 1:30 3:50 6:10 8:30
2 NATIONAL TREASURE
10:30 1:15 3:40 6:05 8:30
3 ALEXANDER
11:00 2:10 5:20 8:30
4 THE POLAR EXPRESS
11:45 1:55 4:05 6:15 8:30

CAINTA 240-4661

1 ALEXANDER
10:05 1:15 4:30 8:00
2 HAROLD AND KUMAR
11:00 1:20 3:40 6:00 8:20
3 HONEY
11:00 1:20 3:40 6:00 8:20
4 NATIONAL TREASURE
11:15 2:10 5:05 8:00

BRIDGET JONES



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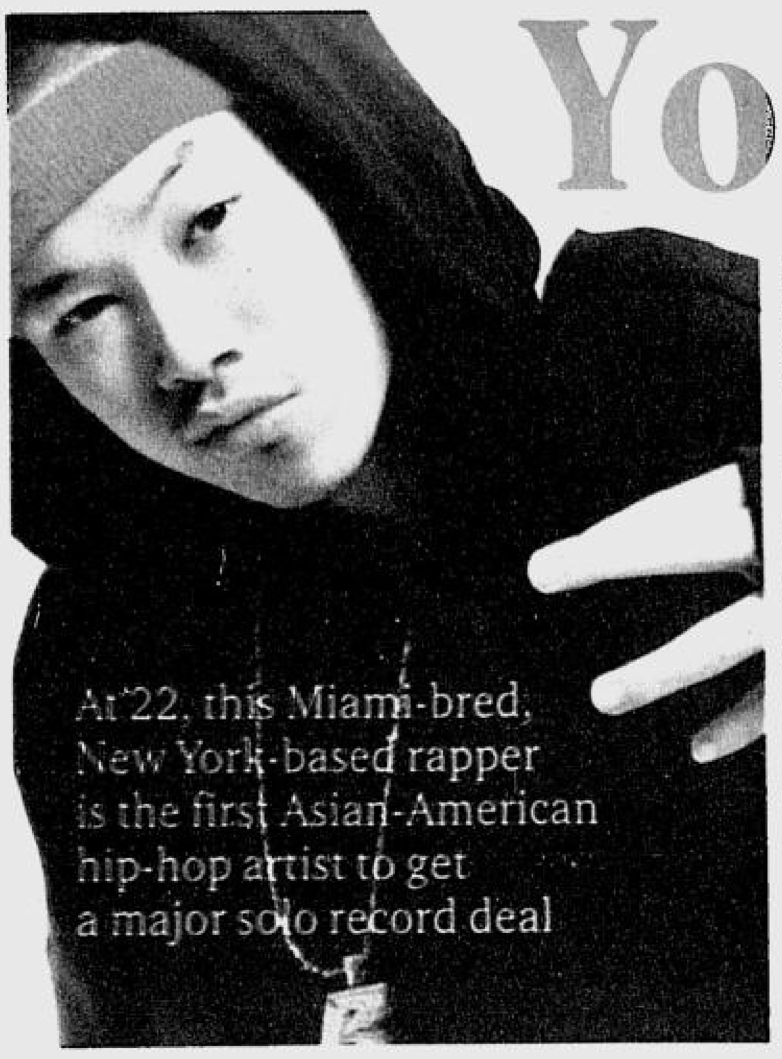

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At the same time, he worries that it's his race, not his rhymes, generating all the attention.

"Being Asian helps me so much," he says. "It definitely raises the interest level. But for every three steps forward, it's five back because being the ethnicity that I am completely overshadows what I'm bringing to the table."

What he brings on his debut album, "The Rest Is History," is a mix of songs that smack of old-school hip-hop's wit and optimism, delivered with a flow and tone similar to Eminem.

All about Asia

The CD is also chock-full of references to Jin's roots, including mentions of the Great Wall of China, basketball big man Yao Ming, China's forced-adoption policy, Tiananmen Square and the struggle of Asian immigrants.

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Consumers have so far given a lukewarm embrace to the young rapper who earned his reputation as a freestyle battler. His album hit the Billboard Top 200 at No. 54 in October with some 20,000 units sold, then dropped precipitously.

"I don't believe Jin is a flash in the pan," says Lionel Ridenour, who's helping develop Jin as Virgin Records' executive vice president of urban music. "I think that he's only begun to scratch the surface. It's all about consistency."

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- Canned goods
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- Iodized salt
- Rice

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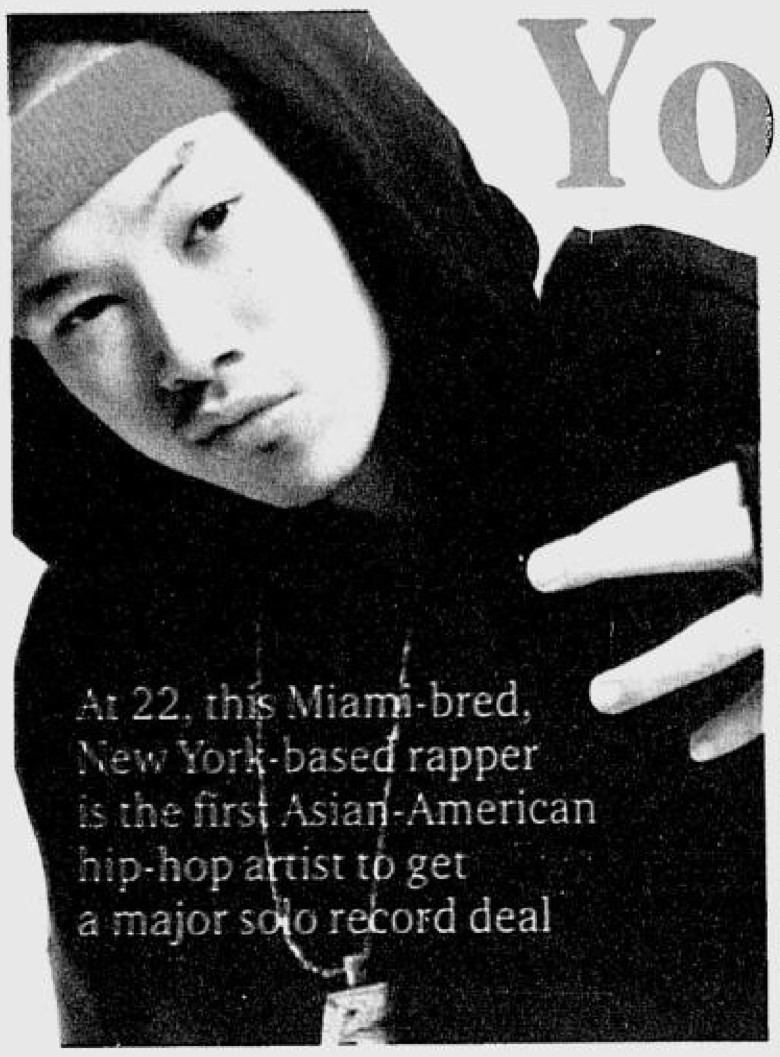

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AP

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By Fe Zamora
Inq7.net

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email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Wednesday, December 22, 2004 ★★ 72 pages / 9 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 14 P18

website: www.inq7.net

JDV daughter's burial 'a celebration of her life'

By Carlito Pablo

WHITE and pastel hues, symbolizing light and life, are the colors for KC's send-off today. Butterflies and balloons will convey "her spirit to God's warm embrace."

KC's cremated remains will be interred in a crypt at the rear portion of the Santuario de

JDV DAUGHTER'S/ A22

Estrada breaks down

FPJ laid to rest at North Cemetery today; Palace on red alert

By Fe Zamora, Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Luige A. del Puerto

OVERCOME by grief, deposed President Joseph Estrada broke down and wept as he caressed the forehead of his friend of 40 years, Fernando Poe Jr., last night.

It was the first time that the ousted leader had seen his buddy since the acknowledged King of Philippine movies died more than a week ago.

Estrada said his farewell during necrological services at Sto. Domingo Church hours before legions of Poe's supporters were to carry him in a funeral march to the North Cemetery for burial at noon today.

The jampacked crowd of hundreds in the church broke into applause as Estrada, on trial for plunder, arrived for the ceremonies.

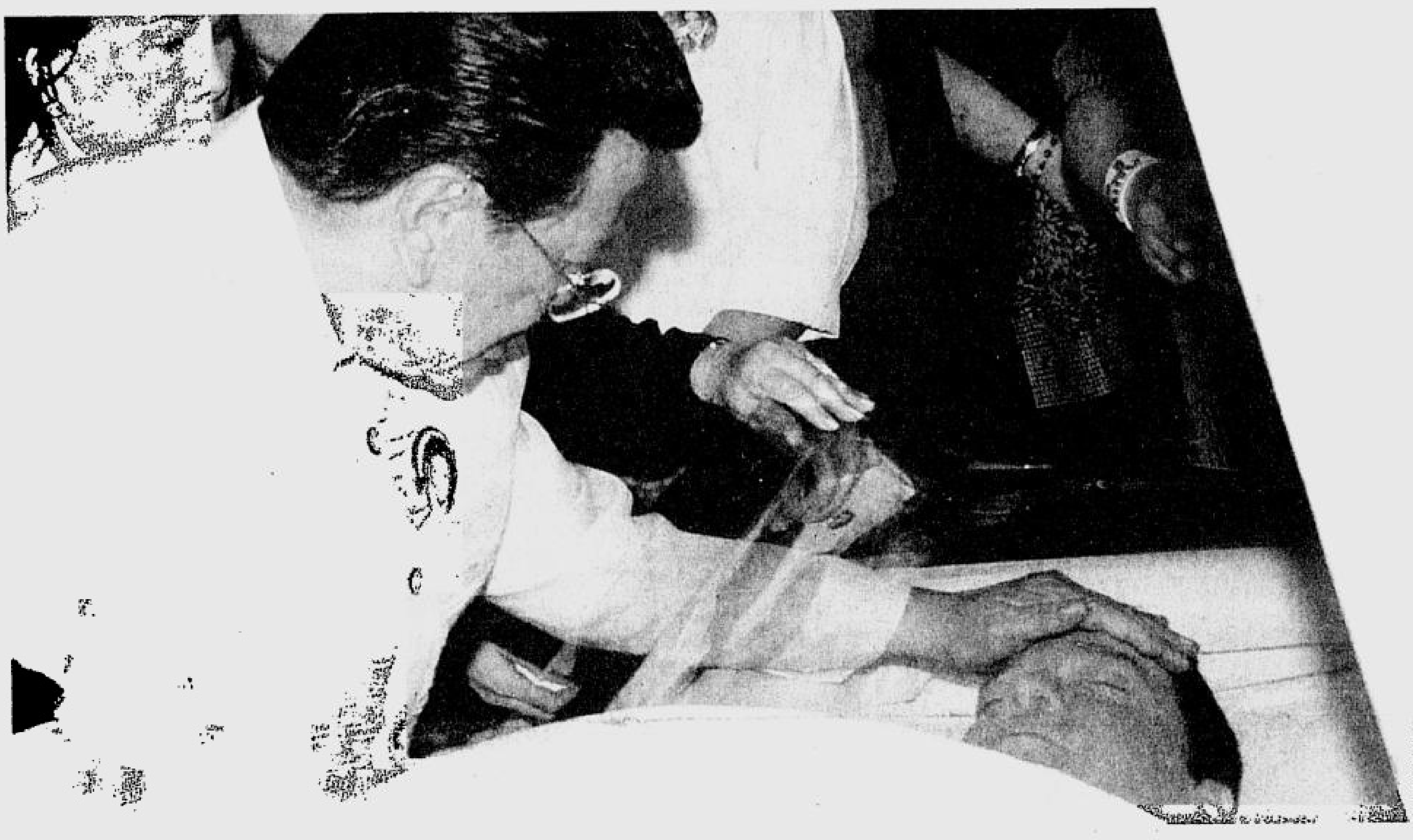
Standing beside the open casket, Estrda bent over and caressed his friend's head, breaking into sobs.

"...*Nang tayo'y huling magkita*... (When we last met)," Poe sang in a taped song that echoed through the church as the grief-stricken Estrada stood over him.

The necrological services were attended by at least three generations of actors, actresses and other show biz personalities—from Dolphy and Eddie Garcia to Judy Ann Santos and Richard Gomez.

With daughter Mary Grace, the widow Susan Roces sat in the front pew, looking regal and grave in black, a double strand

ESTRADA/ A22


VAL HANDUMON

FOR ONE more time, best buddies of more than 40 years former President Joseph Estrada and Fernando Poe Jr. meet again only to say a final goodbye. And there is not a dry eye in the jampacked Sto. Domingo Church at the start of the necrological rites on Tuesday night. For security reasons, Estrada was not allowed by the court to attend the funeral.

Palace armed to the teeth; officials' entry thru back door

By Christian V. Esguerra, Leila B. Salaverria and Juliet Labog-Javellana

MALACAÑANG has battened down the hatches ahead of the expected massive outpouring of grief and anger during the funeral of Fernando Poe Jr.

The Armed Forces and the Presidential Security Group are on red alert, and more stringent security measures have been put in place around the Palace.

"We are on red alert and, therefore, we are observing tighter security measures. We are making preparations for any eventuality. The entire AFP is on red alert," PSG chief Col. Delfin Bangit told reporters.

Bangit said Malacañang officials, em-

PNP ARMED/ A22

3 weddings and a funeral at Sto. Domingo

By Luige A. del Puerto

THREE weddings and a funeral are scheduled today at Sto. Domingo Church—but not necessarily in that order.

According to plans earlier released to the media, there will be a funeral Mass for Fernando Poe Jr. at 2 a.m. His coffin will leave the church at 3:30 a.m. for his final resting place at the Manila North Cemetery.

If the announced schedule is followed, it will give wedding organizers enough time to work on the decorations inside the church.

On the day Poe's remains leave the church, three couples will begin their lives as husbands and wives.

3 WEDDINGS/ A5

Chavit: GMA official facilitated Erap passport

By Leila B. Salaverria and Armand N. Nocum

MALACAÑANG facilitated the issuance of a passport to deposed President Joseph Estrada so he could travel to Hong Kong for medical treatment, Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson said yesterday.

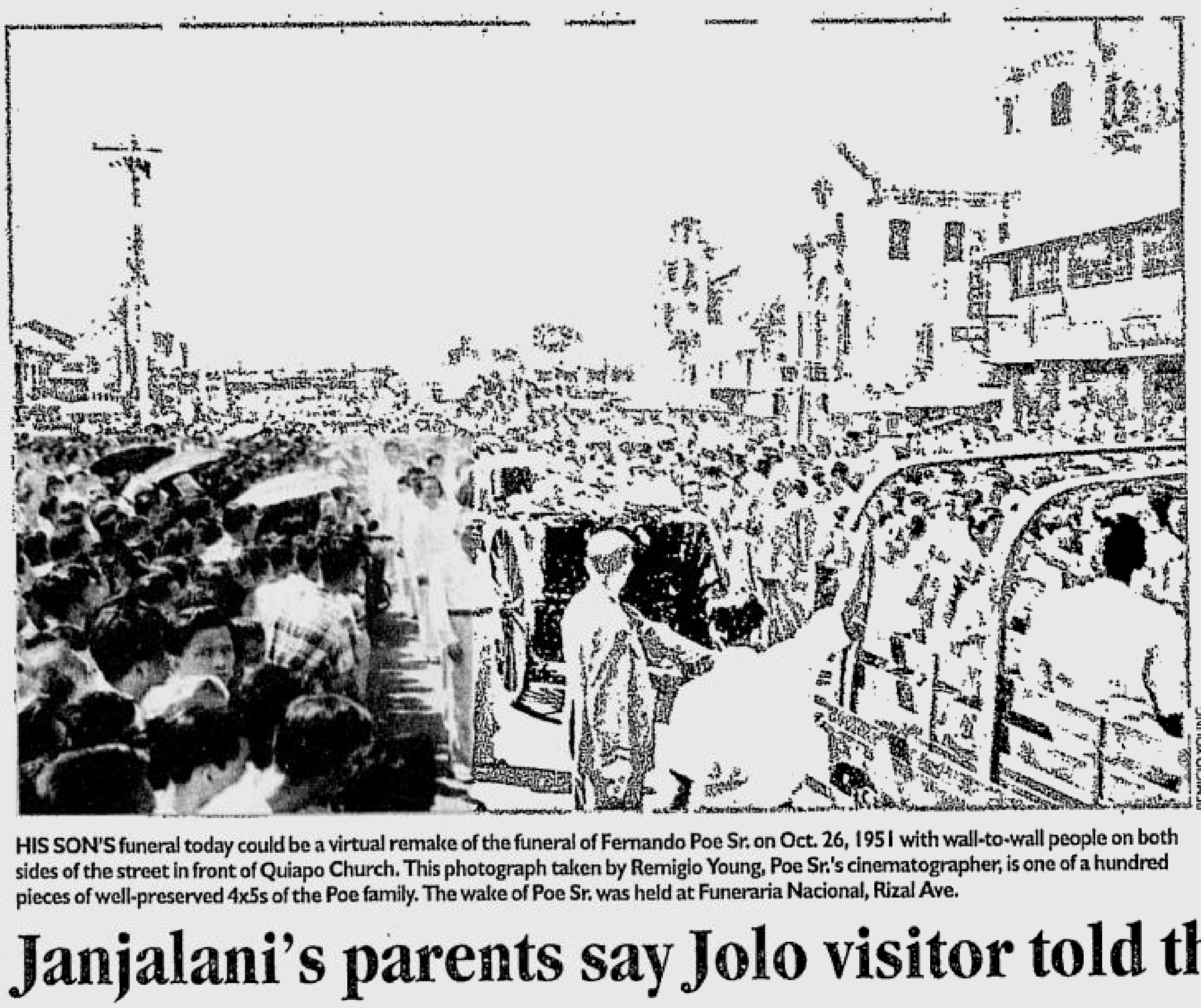
"I know *binigyan siya kaagad ng* passport *bago pa bumaba ang desisyon* (I know he was immediately given a passport even before the decision was handed down)," he said, referring to the Sandiganbayan decision granting Estrada's request to seek treatment abroad.

Asked if Presidential Chief of Staff Norberto Gonzales was involved in the quick release of Estrada's passport, Singson said: "*Sino ba siya? Sino ba ang nag*-appoint *sa kanya* (Who is he? Who appointed him to his post)?"

Gonzales acknowledged on Monday that he had talked with Estrada, who is detained in Tanay, Rizal, on plunder and perjury charges, to personally arrange the "technical requirements" of the former President's trip to Hong Kong, which is tentatively scheduled for Thursday.

Singson is against the court decision granting Estrada's request to travel

CHAVIT/ A5


REMIGIO YOUNG

HIS SON'S funeral today could be a virtual remake of the funeral of Fernando Poe Sr. on Oct. 26, 1951 with wall-to-wall people on both sides of the street in front of Quiapo Church. This photograph taken by Remigio Young, Poe Sr.'s cinematographer, is one of a hundred pieces of well-preserved 4x5s of the Poe family. The wake of Poe Sr. was held at Funeraria Nacional, Rizal Ave.

Flashback: FPJ Sr.'s wake like his son's

By Ernie U. Sarmiento
Chief Photographer

THE PHOTOGRAPHS make for a virtual replay—of the wake for the movie star Fernando Poe Sr. in October 1951, of people lining Quezon Boulevard in front of the Quiapo Church to view the passing truck pulling his casket, of various scenes at his funeral.

They were taken by Remigio "Migie" Young, cinematographer of Poe Sr.'s Royal Productions from the early 1950s to the '70s. Before his death in November 1975, Young entrusted the rolls of film to his nephew and surrogate son, Freddie "Cox" Aban, who yesterday showed the treasure to the INQUIRER still in the original yellow-and-black Kodak box.

The collection—some 100 well-preserved 4x5s as well as 120mm black-and-white negatives—includes family portraits of the Poes taken in the '50s, a photograph of a young and handsome Poe Sr. leaning on a coconut tree dressed in T-shirt and slacks, even of Fernando Poe Jr. as a barefoot boy.

Young took the pictures using a 4x5

FLASHBACK/ A7

Janjalani's parents say Jolo visitor told them son dead

By Arlyn dela Cruz

(Second of two parts)

THE PARENTS of Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaffy Janjalani themselves had heard their youngest son was dead.

"Someone from Jolo came to visit us," the rebel chief's 65-year-old mother, Vilma Montano-Janjalani, said. "'*Shaheed*' *na raw* (He's dead)."

But when the parents asked the visitor how their son died, she said they were just told that he died from a gunshot wound and that his men were not able to bring him to a hospital or give him any medication.

For two and a half years, this reporter had deliberately stayed away from Basilan and Zamboanga. After being kidnapped in January 2002 by a renegade group in Sulu with suspected links to a military intelligence unit and being held captive for 98 days, she had promised herself that she would never go back to the place.

That kidnapping had been a source of personal pain for her. Many in the media had expressed suspicion that it was a staged incident and cast doubts on her journalistic integrity.

Now, it was time to go back.

On Dec. 16, this reporter went to see Janjalani's parents. And there she was in

JANJALANI'S/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern sections of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/12/22/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Reds declare 10-day holiday truce

COMMUNIST guerrillas yesterday declared a unilateral 10-day Christmas ceasefire, while offering a longer-term truce and tactical alliance with President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The rebel truce declaration, in force between Dec. 23 and Jan. 2, reciprocates a three-week unilateral ceasefire ordered by the President on Thursday.

The party "declared a unilateral ceasefire for the Christmas season and to celebrate the 36th anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines on Dec. 26," the CPP central committee said in a statement.

It said all New People's Army units "will continue to bear arms and remain alert and ready to fight and defeat any attacks and harassment by regular and paramilitary forces" of the military and police.

Earlier yesterday, CPP founder Jose Ma. Sison offered a permanent truce and an alliance with the government on the condition that Arroyo would implement the rebels' agenda.

No to capitulation

Sison said in a statement to news agencies from his self-exile in the Netherlands that such an alliance was possible "if she agrees to fight for complete national independence against [United States] domination and to carry out genuine land reform in conjunction with national industrialization."

Sison rejected any ceasefire to open the door to peace talks, saying this was tantamount to demanding the capitulation of the guerrillas.

The government has previously rejected the communists' calls to enter into a coalition, saying the rebels must contest elections.

The 8,000-member CPP and its armed wing, the NPA, have been waging a Maoist campaign which has claimed thousands of lives for more than three decades.

The communists called off talks with the government in August, accusing it of not doing enough to persuade the US and other Western governments to remove them from these governments' lists of foreign terrorist organizations.

The CPP ceasefire declaration came six days after the President declared the government's traditional Christmas truce, which will last until midnight of Jan. 5.

"The CPP issues this declaration despite the Arroyo regime's continued violation of past agreements that has led to the suspension of the peace talks," the group said.

Gov't inaction

One of the violations of their past agreements, the CPP said, was the government's inaction over the delisting of the CPP, NPA and communist leader Jose Ma. Sison from the US' list of foreign terrorists or terrorist organizations.

Military information chief Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual welcomed the rebels' declaration of a ceasefire.

He said the Armed Forces would strictly observe the ceasefire and that the rebels can visit their families during the ceasefire period without fear of being arrested.

"NPA [guerrillas] can visit and spend time with their families without fear of arrest. Let the soldiers and NPA celebrate Christmas with their loved ones," he said. *Alcuin Papa, Delfin Mallari, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau, and AFP*

Gov't to take up cudgels for Japan-bound Pinoys

By TJ Burgonio

THE GOVERNMENT will insist that its current certification of Filipino entertainers' skills should continue to be the sole requirement for their entry to Japan, after that country recently adopted a more stringent requirement for foreign entertainers.

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said yesterday Filipino officials will press for the continued recognition of the artist's record book (ARB) when they sit down with their Japanese counterparts to discuss the new requirement, which would have entertainers undergo two years of training or have two years' experience in their field before they would be granted a visa.

Japan adopted the new requirement on Dec. 7 after it was chided by the US State Department for failing to check human trafficking, a euphemism for prostitution. Many Filipino entertainers, it is believed, end up as prostitutes in Japan.

The requirement is expected to cut the number of Filipino entertainers going to Japan from 80,000 to 8,000 each year.

"Officially, what we are asking is that our entertainers continue to be accepted with the ARB in Japan. We have tested them very well. I have complete trust in the process that we have," Romulo said in a press briefing.

The ARB is a government document that certifies a talent has undergone the required training and testing for music and dance proficiency and, hence, qualifies for an entertainer's visa from the Japanese Embassy.

Shuhei Ogawa, press officer of the Japanese Embassy in Manila, however, said that if the Philippine government would insist on retaining the ARB, "then it would have to be in addition to the two-year experience requirement."

"If there's good reason, maybe we'll be flexible because it's just a plan. There is no exact date of implementation yet. It's just an action plan so anytime we can just discuss this matter," Ogawa said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo had dispatched Dante Ang of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas to Japan to articulate the government's position along with Ambassador Domingo Siazon, officials said.

SC junks Erap case vs BIR, Citibank

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE SUPREME Court has dismissed former President Joseph Estrada's graft complaint against officials of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and Citibank.

In a 20-page decision on Dec. 9, the high court junked for "lack of merit" Estrada's petition to overturn a Court of Appeals ruling that dismissed his complaint against BIR and Citibank officials.

Estrada had accused the revenue and bank officials of graft and of violating the Foreign Currency Deposits Act when they placed his foreign currency account in the Citibank Greenhills branch under constructive distraint due to the plunder charges against him.

Constructive distraint places the property of a taxpayer who may try to hide it under the control of an authority.

Estrada filed the complaint before the Office of the Ombudsman in January 2001 but the Ombudsman dismissed it in February 2002 for lack of probable cause.

Estrada then went to the Court of Appeals, which turned him down for lack of jurisdiction.

The Supreme Court agreed. It said Estrada should have directly appealed the Ombudsman's decision to the high court and not with the appellate court.

Original owners regain Journal group

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE ORIGINAL owners of the Philippine Journalists Inc. yesterday took back management and control of the government-sequestered publication after handing out a P33.36-million check to the Sandiganbayan.

Gus Villanueva, representing the original stockholders of PJI, said he gave the check to Sandigan sheriff Ed Urieta at around 5 p.m. at the PJI offices which effected the formal turnover of the outfit by Roberto "Bobby" Capco, Journal group publisher and chair of the board.

Urieta said the turnover was "very calm."

The turnover followed a decision of the Supreme Court returning the PJI to its original stockholders.

"The Sandiganbayan sheriff implemented the resolution and the two writs of execution by the (SC). He was authorized, upon receipt of the check, to immediately turn over control of management of the PJI to the stockholders," Otelia Dimayuga-Molo, lawyer of the stockholders, said.

Molo said the present officers of PJI, including Capco, were considered "resigned or replaced" upon the takeover.

Villanueva said he would assume as editor-in-chief.

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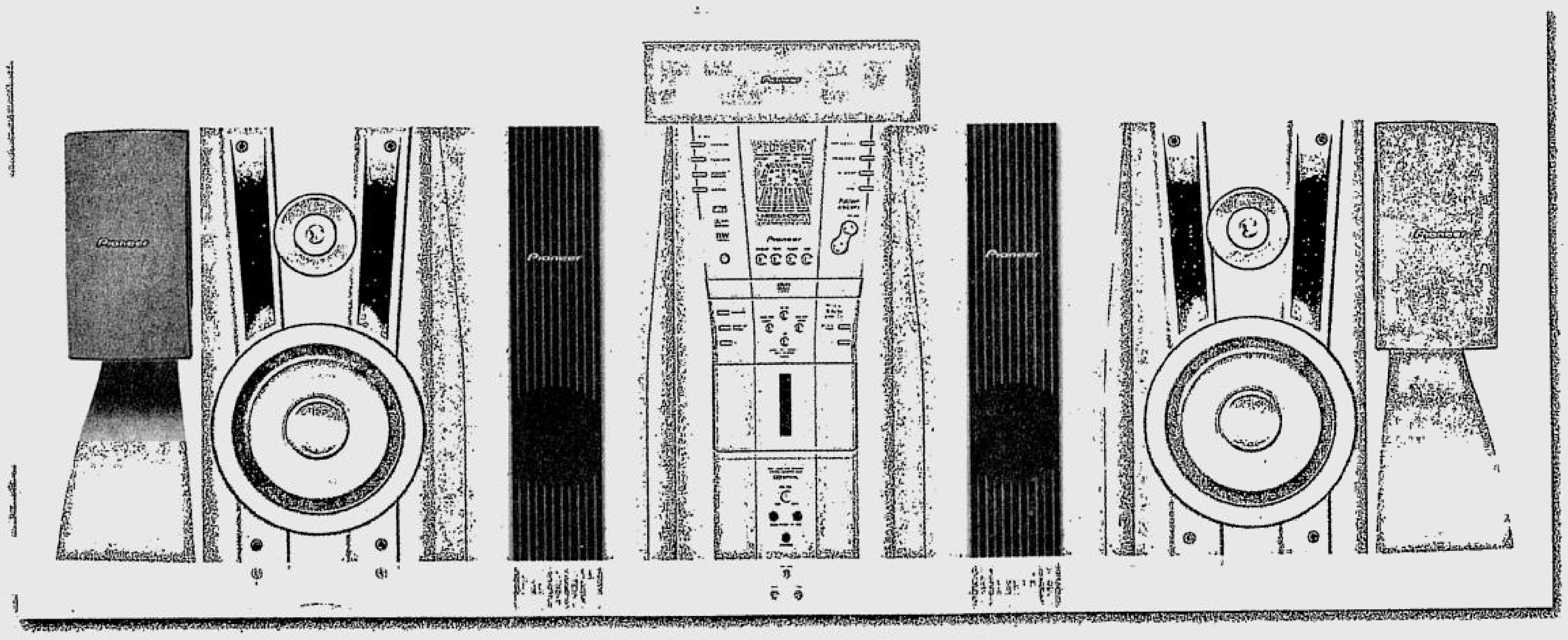
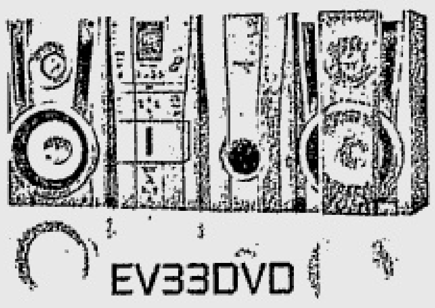
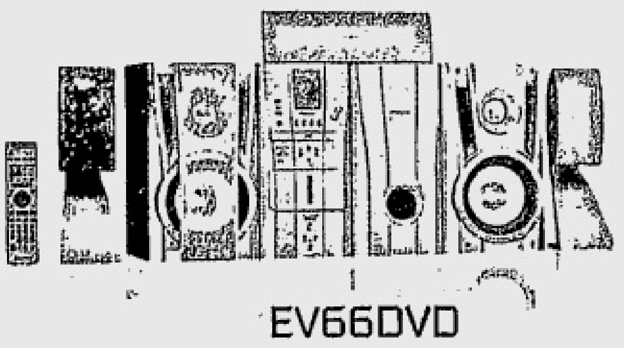




EV33DVD



EV66DVD

EV99DVD

Watch out for the **EV99DVD** from **Pioneer**. Wearing a streamlined design with sleek lines, smooth silver finish that has drawn stares from the local population. The **EV99DVD** is reportedly armed with a **5-speaker system** with **dual subwoofers** and has been known to possess full **Karaoke Functions.** Last seen playing **DVD, VCD, CD, WMA, MP3** and **JPEG** for satisfied buyers. If you come across an **EV99DVD Mini System** at your nearest **Pioneer** dealer, grab one immediately!

Also available: **EV66DVD** and **EV33DVD Mini Systems.**

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No New Year's Eve fireworks for Garcia

By Alcuin Papa

THERE will be no fireworks to celebrate New Year for retired Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, the former finance chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines who is facing a general court-martial for allegedly amassing unexplained wealth.

Yesterday, AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu rejected a recommendation by a military tribunal trying Garcia to allow the controversial general to spend the New Year's celebration at his family's residence on Chicago Street in Cubao, Quezon City.

Garcia would have been allowed to spend time with his family from 8 a.m. of Dec. 31 to 8 a.m. Jan. 2 next year.

"As of now, the decision I've given is that he (Garcia) cannot leave the Isafp (Intelligence Service, AFP) compound, that's my instruction," Abu told reporters. "I haven't replied to the court but because I am the one who gave him the restriction, all orders about when he goes out of the camp or out of detention (relies) on my decision."

Since Nov. 19, a day after his retirement, Garcia, a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1971, has been detained inside the heavily-secured Isafp compound.

Garcia is being tried by the military court on violations of the Articles of War 96, or conduct unbecoming an officer and gentleman, and Articles of War 97, or conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline.

The charges stemmed from Garcia's failure to declare some of his assets in his Statement of Assets and Liabilities allegedly worth P143 million.

Aside from the court-martial charges, Garcia faces four counts of perjury before the Sandiganbayan.

"The policy of the Armed Forces is that if you are under court-martial proceedings, you cannot leave your quarters or the place where you are restricted unless it is very urgent like if you are going to attend a funeral of a relative but if it would only be for vacation, that we cannot allow," Abu explained.

Abu, however, said visitation rights are still granted to the accused.

The same treatment will apply to members of the Magdalo group who had been detained in several military detention centers since last year, Abu said.

"As for the Magdalo (group), they can celebrate Christmas within the Army or within the Armed Forces compound. They can celebrate at the grandstand, at the Daza Park but they cannot leave (their respective) camps," Abu said.

The six core leaders of the group are also detained inside the Isafp compound along with Garcia.

Hopes dim for tax bills

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

WITH only 10 days to go before the year formally ends, Malacañang's hopes that more tax bills would be passed have faded, particularly with House Speaker Jose de Venecia, President Macapagal-Arroyo's point man in Congress, in mourning.

A source said that Malacañang had planned to call a special session of Congress next week but most lawmakers were not too keen on cutting short their Christmas break.

The source said Malacañang was also not too eager to press the matter on De Venecia who recently lost a daughter in a fire at his mansion. Without De Venecia in the lead, the source said it was unlikely that Malacañang could still hold special sessions next week.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye declined to comment when asked if Malacañang had given up hope on the passage of more new revenue measures this year. "There is a possibility that a special session might be called before Congress resumes on Jan. 10," Bunye said in a text message.

Congress went into recess last week approving only the "sin" tax bill raising the excise taxes on tobacco and alcohol products of the eight revenue measures.

The President had boasted that Congress had committed to pass at least four new tax measures before the end of this year. The President even went out of her way to meet top executives of tobacco and telecommunications firms to get their support for her tax bills.

The President wanted to impress credit rating agencies such as Moody's Investor Services that she was serious in solving the fiscal crisis by imposing higher taxes. However, Congress failed to deliver on its promise even though its ranks are dominated by the President's partymates.

In a radio interview, Bunye admitted that the fiscal reforms being pushed by the President "would not happen overnight."

"These will take time to implement and much longer for them to bear fruit," Bunye said.

"The passage of tax measures are not completely in the hands of the President. But while we have a strong executive-legislative partnership, all these bills will have to go through a process and we cannot rush them," he said.

The government is under pressure to raise new revenues to lower its dependence on debt financing which critics said has reached crisis levels.

More Pinoys head for Taiwan

DEPLOYMENT of Filipino workers to Taiwan is expected to top 100,000 by yearend largely due to the recovery of Taiwan's economy and increase in direct air services between Manila and key areas of the city-state, according to the Manila Economic and Cultural Office.

Meco said departures as of May had hit 86,050 and likely to break the 100,000 mark, or an increase of 45 percent over three years. The number of Filipinos who left last year for Taiwan reached 81,355, or an improvement of 18 percent from 68,877 in 2002.

Meco chair Antonio Basilio explained that aside from the recovery of Taiwan's economy, stronger support for Filipino workers and travelers had helped boost deployment.

Basilio said Meco's operations had been strengthened in Taipei, Kaosiung and Taichung, where most Filipinos were employed.

A year for change—GMA

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Juliet Labog-Javellana

FACED with the continued decline in her public approval ratings and the threat of a credit-rating downgrade for the country, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday vowed to make "change" the defining mark of her administration next year.

"2005 is a year for urgent change in the Philippines," the President said in a speech during the 60th anniversary of the Armed Forces in Malacañang yesterday.

Just six months into a fresh six-year term, the President has seen her ratings hit rock bottom in surveys by Social Weather Station largely because of her inability to contain the rising cost of basic goods and services.

Foreign and local business groups also gave her failing marks in solving the fiscal crisis, population problem, smuggling, corruption, and insurgency and pushing for more investments and infrastructure development.

The President is also wary of an imminent credit downgrade from international rating agencies especially after she failed to parlay her party's dominance of Congress into tax-reform legislation. Only one of eight tax bills that she proposed has been passed by the legislature.

A credit downgrade could push the government deeper into fiscal crisis.

"To get the economy back on track, we will improve tax collection, pass a budget that will support our 10-point legacy plan and pro-poor agenda and take executive action to break the culture of corruption," the President said.

Ms Arroyo has also prioritized funding to accelerate the implementation of three highway projects—the Metro Manila Skyway Extension from Bicutan to Alabang (P2.35 billion), the Southern Tagalog Arterial Road extension from Lipa to Batangas City (P1.38 billion), the widening and improvement of Manila North Road from Meycauayan to Tarlac (P1.28 billion)—by next year.

For the first time in its 69 years, the AFP had a low-key, indoor anniversary celebration at Malacañang's Ceremonial Hall yesterday.

AFP Chief Gen. Efren Abu said this departure from the traditional grand celebration of AFP Day was made to manifest the military's solidarity with the victims of four destructive typhoons that hit Luzon earlier this month.

Of the P10 million to P15 million that the AFP would have spent for its anniversary celebration, Abu said the AFP donated P4 million to the government's fund for the relief and rehabilitation of the victims of the calamity.

The AFP's big day used to be a four-hour affair held at the grounds of its Camp Aguinaldo headquarters, with four battalions involving more than 1,000 soldiers participating in a grand parade, attended by the country's highest officials, led by the President, and where medals and awards are handed out.

The AFP leadership opted instead to hold the celebration in Malacañang. About 100 AFP officers and soldiers attended the ceremony that lasted only 45 minutes.

Furniture firms appeal log ban

By Volt Contreras

THE CHAMBER of Furniture Industries of the Philippines yesterday appealed to the government to lift the suspension of all logging activities nationwide by the first week of January 2005.

The umbrella group of some 12,000 companies, CFIP warned that if the suspension went on indefinitely, its export-oriented members could start missing production deadlines and lose customers because of the lack of raw materials.

The chamber asked Malacañang and Environment Secretary Michael Defensor to limit the suspension order issued on Dec. 8 to "not more than 30 days."

The Palace issued the order in line with the renewed crackdown on illegal loggers, the perceived culprits behind the massive forest denudation that caused landslides and flash floods that killed hundreds in Luzon during the recent storms.

The order has paralyzed the harvest and transport of timber from public lands covered by forest management agreements between logging firms and the government. Tree plantations on private lands, however, were not covered by the order.

In a press conference, the CFIP also asked Defensor to exempt "minor forest products" like rattan, vines, bark, fiber, etc. from the list of wood products covered by the suspension.

CFIP president Nicolas de Lange maintained that "we support the temporary suspension" to allow the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to run after illegal loggers and review the operations of forest concessionaires.

But he said "a suspension of logging operations for more than 30 days would severely affect our industry's production cycle."

"The image of our (furniture) industry is at stake here. We might lose our markets to our competitors if we cannot deliver on time," said Ederito Feliciano of Aweca Group, a major manufacturer.

"Buyers will not wait until we settle the issue (of illegal logging). It's the speed to market that is very critical," added Eliseo Miranda, president of the Foreign Buyers Association of the Philippines.

Though the country has always enjoyed an edge in terms of furniture design and craftsmanship, it may lose its market share to China and other Asian countries that can offer cheaper products owing to their low labor costs, De Lange further warned.

According to the CFIP, the industry earned $278 million, or P15.6 billion, last year in export sales alone while providing jobs for up to 1.8 million Filipinos. Up to 41 percent of its production relies on wood for material, the rest being derived from lighter forest products, metals, stone and plastic.

2 more bodies found in Real

CALAMBA CITY—Two more bodies were unearthed yesterday from the rubble of the Repador Building in Barangay Tignoan, Real, Quezon, as a military engineering brigade continued its search for victims in the debris of the building that collapsed on Nov. 29 at the height of Tropical Depression "Winnie."

Maj. Gen. Efren Orbon, chief of the 2nd Infantry Division of the Philippine Army, said the bodies were those of a young boy and a young female. They were found buried in mud at about 9:30 a.m. yesterday by soldiers and volunteer workers.

The discovery brought the total number of recovered bodies from the collapsed building to 81.

Orbon said the two bodies have yet to be identified as they were in an "advanced state of decomposition" after being buried in thick mud for 22 days.

He said residents are being asked to join officials in an "accounting" of residents to help decide whether to stop or continue with retrieval operations.

Some 50 members of the 2nd D, headed by Capt. Gerry Sultan, have been digging through the debris since Dec. 3.

"It is clear to our men (that they) continue digging for trapped victims until the residents themselves and the local health officials express in a formal written request that we should stop our operations," Orbon said. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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Palace facilitated Erap passport, says Chavit

From page A1

abroad, saying that the plan of the former President to undergo a knee-replacement operation was just for show.

"Finish the case first. If Estrada is innocent, free him. if guilty, pardon him. But we should not let him escape," he said at a press conference that he and several private prosecutors called on Monday.

Singson, who is also accusing Malacañang of entering into compromise deals with Estrada, had threatened to withdraw support from President Macapagal-Arroyo should she fail to stop Estrada's trip to Hong Kong.

Visit to mother

Estrada visited his mother Mary Ejercito in Greenhills, San Juan, yesterday, but avoided reporters to comply with the Sandiganbayan condition that he not grant media interviews.

Estrada arrived by helicopter and immediately proceeded to his mother's house on Kennedy Street at about 11 a.m. He was joined by family members for lunch.

"He wants to strictly follow the no-media interviews set by the court, lest he lose his 24-hour pass or even the trip to Hong Kong," said one of Estrada's media aides, who asked not to be named.

The source said Estrada wanted to refrain from saying bad things about Singson, which might put the court or Malacañang in a bad light.

The talking was left to defense lawyers Rene Saguisag and Jose Flaminiano, who vowed to pursue contempt charges against Singson and the private prosecutors for allegedly undermining the integrity of the court.

No pressure

Singson accused the Sandiganbayan of succumbing to Palace pressure when it allowed Estrada to travel to Hong Kong.

"It's contemptuous. That cannot be. They have no evidence against the justices. These justices will not risk their position by succumbing to dictation from any quarter," Flaminiano said.

Former Rep. Didagen Dilangalen denied that Estrada had entered into a deal with the Palace so he could leave for Hong Kong.

"The (Arroyo administration) twice offered him to leave for voluntary exile shortly after he was illegally removed from power, but he refused, saying he was born here and he will die here. Besides, he is convinced that he did no harm to the Filipino people," said Dilangalen, Estrada's spokesperson.

Estrada even fears he may not be allowed to return to the country, according to Dilangalen.

"He wants to have a written guarantee from this government allowing him to return here," he said.

He said he did not believe that the court was party to any deal. "The court is independent. We are talking here of merits," Dilangalen, a lawyer, said of the court's decision to allow Estrada to go abroad.

Fernando Poe, Jr. (FPJ)

LEONCIO BALBIN JR./PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

BIG FAN of "Da King", too: Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson shows off the FPJ room in his sprawling Baluarte mansion in Vigan.

Flaminiano said Ms Arroyo would be the last person to undermine the integrity of the court.

"She has always declared that she will not interfere in the affairs of the judiciary," he said.

Restraining order

In Malacañang, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Singson was just trying to get the high court's attention when he threatened to sever his ties to the administration.

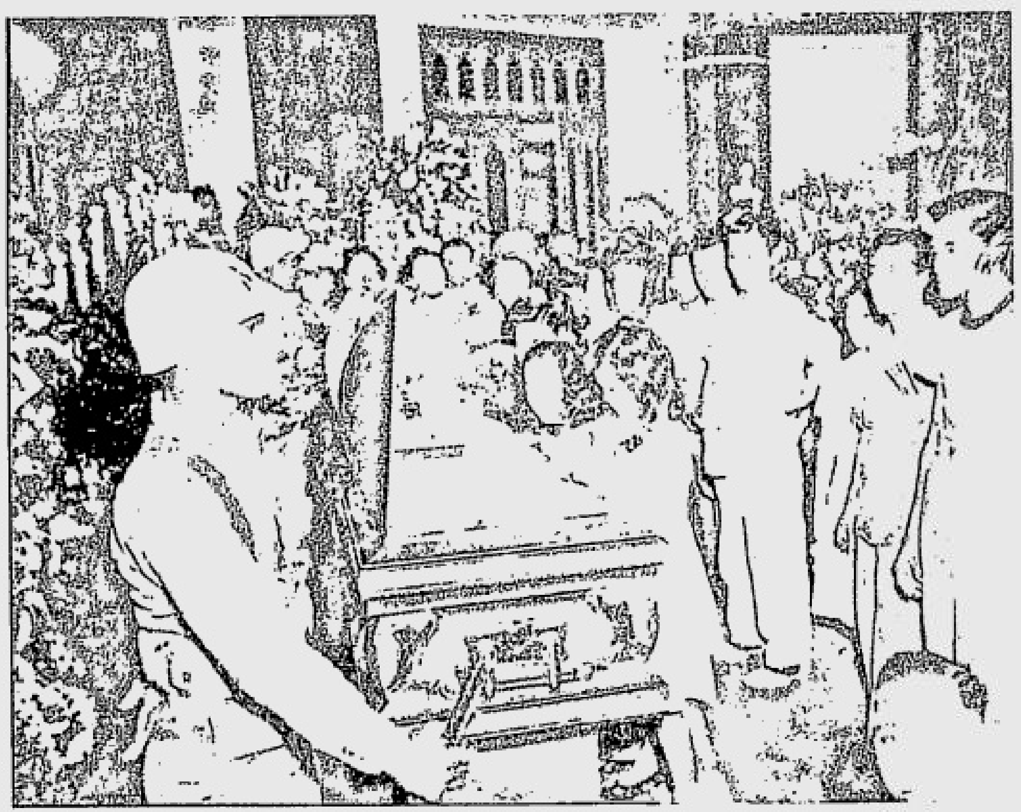
In an interview with dzRH, Bunye said Singson wanted the Supreme Court to issue a temporary restraining order to stop Estrada from leaving.

A cause-oriented group, Plunder Watch, has filed a case with the Supreme Court opposing the Sandiganbayan's decision allowing Estrada to travel abroad.

"The former President's schedule is near (Dec. 23) and I think he (Singson) succeeded in getting the Supreme Court's attention," Bunye said.

He said Malacañang would abide by any decision handed down by the Supreme Court.

With a report from Gil Cabacungan Jr.



THE WAKE of Fernando Poe Sr. complete with honor guards for his service as a guerrilla fighter.

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3 weddings . . .

From page A1

Yes, there will be three weddings and a funeral—potent symbols of life and death.

For the three couples, today is truly a "new dawn" because they would be taking part in one of man's oldest and grandest traditions.

Yesterday, a young couple also said their "I dos" and vowed to be together 'till death do us part."

As the sun set, strains of the Wedding March filled the halls of St. Martin's Chapel where lay Poe's remains. For a brief moment, Mendelssohn's solemn composition drowned out the sobs of fans gathered next door saying their goodbyes to their idol.

A blessing

Asked what he thought of exchanging vows a few paces away from Da King's bier, 22-year-old groom Bernard Bisnar said he considered it a blessing.

"I know that in a way, he (Poe) is giving us his blessings," he said.

Bernard and his bride-to-be, Ma. Roselle Marene, 24, had been together for almost four years when they decided to tie the knot.

It is probably not just a coincidence that Bernard works as administrative assistant at St. Luke's Medical Center, where Poe was rushed two Saturdays ago.

"In a way, he was close to us. After all, he spent some time in the hospital where I work," Bernard told the INQUIRER minutes before he and Roselle became "husband and wife."

Today at 9 a.m., Salvador Calma III and Myra Borigas will also be married at the Sto. Domingo Church.

Renan Lacaden and Gemma Lyn Faustino will follow suit at 3 p.m.

Finally, Robert Dogelio and Gelyn Acuna will also say their "I dos" an hour after.

Parish priest Gerard Zabala said: "We want to make the weddings as solemn as possible."

Cooperative

He added that the FPJ Wake Committee had been very cooperative with the church management.

"When they came here, they knew the situation. They made the necessary arrangements and they have been very cooperative," Zabala said.

"In fact, we have also asked their volunteers to help in the preparation of the wedding. Much work still needs to be done," the Dominican priest added.

Poe's family and friends had earlier remarked that Poe himself wouldn't want to inconvenience anyone, least of all people on their wedding day.

The funeral march, dubbed "Martsang-Libing Tungo sa Bagong Umaga (Funeral March Toward a New Day), starts at 4 a.m.

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MILF spokesman says Janjalani very much alive

COTABATO CITY—Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaffy Janjalani is very much alive—so says the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu yesterday disputed military reports that the emir of the al-Qaida-linked terror group might have been killed in an aerial bombardment in Datu Piang, Maguindanao, on Nov. 19.

Kabalu said that, based on the result of a "joint investigation" conducted by the government and the MILF ceasefire committee, there was no indication that Janjalani had died in the attack.

There were "no fatalities, except for one MILF fighter wounded," in that incident, Kabalu said.

In Zamboanga City, Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza said that aside from "intelligence reports," a civilian informant and an MILF surrenderee had corroborated other reports about the "death" of the elusive bandit leader.

"And now we are challenging the ASG to prove that Janjalani is alive and produce him in whatever manner, proving he is really alive and active," Braganza said.

"(The INQUIRER story) is very revealing, [it was] based on our intelligence source," Braganza said.

He said that "we have an ongoing effort to locate the burial site or the remains of Janjalani in the general area of Datu Piang, Maguindanao."

The National Bureau of Investigation's director for Central Mindanao, Silvino Cinches, also disputed reports about Janjalani's supposed death, saying he had received information the rebel chief had been sighted in Malaysia and in Indonesia.

At Camp Aguinaldo, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Efren Abu said he had received a report that Janjalani was killed in the Nov. 19 air attack but that another military report had stated Janjalani had also been sighted in South Cotabato.

"We have been receiving reports that Janjalani is dead but we cannot confirm this report," Abu said. "Since then, we have been receiving reports that Janjalani is somewhere in South Cotabato. That is one thing that has been giving us an idea that he is still alive." *Charlie C. Señase, Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau and Alcuin Papa in Manila*

Janjalani's parents say . . .

From page A1

her old haunt again, peering into the grief etched on the faces of a mother and an ailing, 76-year-old father, Abubakar.

It was the grief of parents who had lost a son but were not sure where he lay buried. Could they be faking it? But the Janjalani patriarch was very, very weak.

In Tausug, he said that the fate of his eldest son, the slain Abu Sayyaf founding leader, Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani, was better. At least, the old man said, they were able to see his body and bury him inside their compound.

No last embrace

"At least, we were able to embrace him but not our youngest son. We have not seen him for a long time and now this news, *'shaheed' na siya,*" said Vilma.

Then, an awful thought struck her: "Could it be that they poisoned him? We don't know but maybe they poisoned my son."

Why would she say that?

"That is just my feeling, that he was poisoned. There were stories like that, but we really don't know," she answered.

What about the reports that he was wounded?

Buried in the jungles

The father said he had no idea but his son was very close to Radhulan Sahiron, another wanted Abu Sayyaf personality. He said the military was constantly operating in Sahiron's Patikul area.

In the days after Nov. 18, when Janjalani last contacted this reporter via e-mail, there had been no reported military ground operation, specifically none in the general area of Patikul.

"Could it be that it was there where he was killed?" Vilma asked. "But they didn't say. All they said was that he was wounded and was no longer treated, that no one brought him to a hospital, that no doctor came."

The unknown visitor had told the parents that Janjalani was buried in the jungles of Sulu but did not specify where.

Mother's wish

Given a chance, they said they would want to see his grave but how could they when they did not know where he lay?

"We are already weak and we can no longer travel," Vilma said. "All we want is to be together. Our hour is near and we want to be with the children, our grandchildren. They are our only joys."

At Bilibid's Maximum Security Compound, Janjalani's brother Hector had said: "Just as I thought but he would not believe. He was hard-headed and so overconfident. Maybe, he was really poisoned."

'Am just a flower vase'

Hector, serving a double life term, recalled an incident in 2000 when he said he confronted Janjalani in their camp in Patikul: "So, is this how you want to be now? You wake in the morning, they prepare your food and you are just waiting for your death."

He said his brother told him in response: "Flower *vase na lang ako dito. Hindi naman ako nasusunod. Gumawa ka ng paraan kung paano ako makakalabas dito. Lahat ng paraan na kaya mo* (I have become a flower vase here. I am no longer obeyed. Find a way to get me out of here. You can do anything)."

"There was nothing I could do for him," Hector said.

But if Khadaffy Janjalani was dead, again, where was the body?

Exhumation is forbidden

The parents and Hector, as well, said that in Islam, exhumation of a body was prohibited. "Haram," they said, meaning it is forbidden.

While the military and the police would definitely welcome news of Janjalani's death, they obviously would not accept it without any solid proof, said a police general.

In fact, a week before the Dec. 12 bombing of a General Santos City public market that killed 14 people, a police intelligence unit reported that Janjalani was sighted in Davao City near Jollice Restaurant. The informant was identified as someone "who personally knows Janjalani."

A retired general helping in the government pursuit of Janjalani, when asked what his last information was, said: "He is somewhere in the Zamboanga mainland." But the information was not substantiated by any specific dates of sighting.

Braganza's information

Perhaps the Marine colonel who was involved in the operation to get Abu Sayyaf's Abu Sabaya might have his own sources of information? But all he said in his brief text reply was: "He's just around."

So far, the only details available were that he was supposedly hit during an air strike in Datu Piang on Nov. 19 in an area supposedly under the control of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Checks showed that an Air Force MG-520 bomber did strike the area that day at the request of the Army's 6th Infantry based in Cotabato's Awang Headquarters.

In a follow-up operation, a Huey helicopter tried to inject ground troops but was driven back by intense fire.

Braganza said his information that Janjalani had been killed came from an MILF surrenderee but he declined to reveal his source's name.

Body ripped by bomb

Braganza said that, according to his informant, Janjalani was wounded in the bombardment but that ground fire forced back Air Force pilots trying to bring in troops.

"They were fired upon. That was why our troops were not able to get off. In fact, the tail of the Huey chopper was hit," Braganza said. "There was a heavy firefight, according to the initial spot report."

Braganza said "it was an isolated target" that the pilots hit from the air.

"We saw two nipa huts from the air. There was information that Janjalani was there so I called in an air strike. The shooting of our troops when they tried to land confirmed the Abu Sayyaf presence there."

If Janjalani was dead, why hadn't he made any announcement?

Story without end

"I don't want to get burned. The information has to be definite," Braganza said. "It's difficult ... The information was that he was gravely wounded and that there was even an attempt to bring him to Zamboanga."

"Ang sabi pa nga ng asset, parang nahati ang katawan (In fact, the informant said that it appeared his body was torn in two)."

Asked about the incident, Air Force spokesperson Col. Restituto Padilla said: "It happened quickly. They were surprised by the resistance coming from the ground. The soldiers were not able to get down."

So is Janjalani dead? Is there a closure? As in some stories like this, maybe there is no closure.

Maybe all that this reporter has left, as she sailed away from Basilan this December morning, is a legend.

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Cemetery . . .

From page A1

burial of Fernando Poe Jr. today.

For P5,000, a media group can gain access to the rooftop of a mausoleum overlooking the actor's tomb.

For a discounted fee of P3,000, a newspaper can set up its cameras on a tomb beside the Poe family plot.

Business is brisk, but this happens only once in a blue moon, according to cemetery caretakers Gil Quita and Rolly Dimarucot.

"*Hindi naman palagi* (It's not often)," said caretaker Quita as he helped the INQUIRER negotiate the mounds and niches beside the Poe plot.

Since Saturday, Quita and Dimarucot have been busy negotiating with media groups which want to get a spot with a good view of FPJ's final resting place.

Best view

An early bird, the ABS-CBN network got the "best views" from the rooftop of a mausoleum and from a scaffolding erected beside it, just across from the actor's family plot, Quita said.

He said the network also gained exclusive rights to shoot from his three-story concrete house, which overlooks Poe's final resting place from the side.

The INQUIRER and the other television networks will have to position themselves on the adjacent lot already crowded with concrete niches.

"This space is available but you cannot trim the leaves off that plant (that blocked the view of the FPJ tomb)," Quito said in a serious tone.

At Sto. Domingo Church where FPJ lay, Dominican priests were also charging for the use of space in covering today's funeral Mass.

A reporter of Channel 9 said the church management was asking for P100,000 from the networks before they could set up their equipment. Asked what the money was for, Fr. Pablo Encinas was quoted as saying "for donation. *Bahala na kayo.*" The amount was later lowered to P40,000.

The INQUIRER tried to get the side of the church management last night but it was holding a meeting.

Brisk business for vendors

Outside the church, business was also brisk. Vendors were selling rice cakes, fish balls, *sago*, *balut*, crispy chicken skin, dried squid, congee, FPJ T-shirts, headbands, wrist bands and socks.

But an FPJ vest as a souvenir was all that Pedring Atienza, 70, wanted to bring home to Barangay Nag-iba Dos, Naujan, Mindoro Oriental. "It's 700 pesos. Maybe it will be cheaper tomorrow," Atienza said.

A light, white cotton T-shirt printed with FPJ's name cost P50 while a thicker T-shirt with his name and silk-screened image was selling for P150 to P200.

"I Love FPJ" headbands were priced at P10, wristbands at P20, and FPJ socks from P15 to P25.

Free Coke, packed food

But some items came free.

Coke in cans, courtesy of San Miguel Corp. chair Eduardo 'Danding' Cojuangco were given free to every man, woman and child as they came out from viewing the remains of FPJ at the St. Martin chapel of Sto. Domingo.

Packed food donated by restaurateurs and caterers close to FPJ were being distributed free to marshals, doctors, media people and volunteers assigned to do assorted jobs inside the chapel, in the church courtyard and around the Sto. Domingo Church.

Poster calendars for 2004 were distributed "as souvenir only," according to an FPJ volunteer.

Copies of the pamphlet titled "Estrada v. Arroyo: Rule of Law or Rule of Force?" by Alan F. Paguia were being distributed by Romeo Canoda, a coordinator for "Sulo ng Pilipino," a pro-Poe non-government organization.

"Please read p. 29, number 30-31, and ponder," Canoda told the INQUIRER.

'Adios, Gloria'

Written on the page was advice on what the people must do in a situation in which the minority would prevail over the majority, violating a basic principle in a democracy.

"They (the people) must take appropriate and timely action to do what is right in accordance with their conscience," Canoda pointed out.

When the people decide to take that action, "it's *adios*, Gloria," he said gleefully, referring to President Macapagal-Arroyo. *With a report from Luigi del Puerto*

Flashback . . .

From page A1

Speed Graphic camera popular among press photographers at the time, said Aban, now a wedding photographer much in demand.

The negatives, if exposed correctly and scanned by a high-resolution scanner, can be enlarged to as big as billboard-sized pictures, like the outdoor advertisements now dotting Edsa.

Star-studded neighborhood

According to Aban, Young' developed the film in the basement of the family home at No. 5, Cristobal St., Cubao, Quezon City. The neighborhood was star-studded, counting among its residents such luminaries as directors Gil de Leon and Artemio Marquez and actors Rod Navarro and Fred Montilla.

"He gave prints to his subjects and kept the processed film inside a cabinet in his room. He never showed it to anyone," Aban said.

Young told his nephew about the collection before he died. "I was then following in his footsteps, tagging along as apprentice cinematographer and still photographer for the movies. He influenced me," Aban said.

Young won a Famas Best in Cinematography award for the movie "Luksang Tagumpay" in 1956. He also did the cinematography for several American feature films as well as the blockbuster "Philcag in Vietnam" in the '70s.

Other favorite subjects

Aban said that aside from the Poes, his uncle's favorite subjects included Manuel Conde, director of the "Juan Tamad" series, the actress Paraluman and Rosa del Rosario, the very first "Darna."

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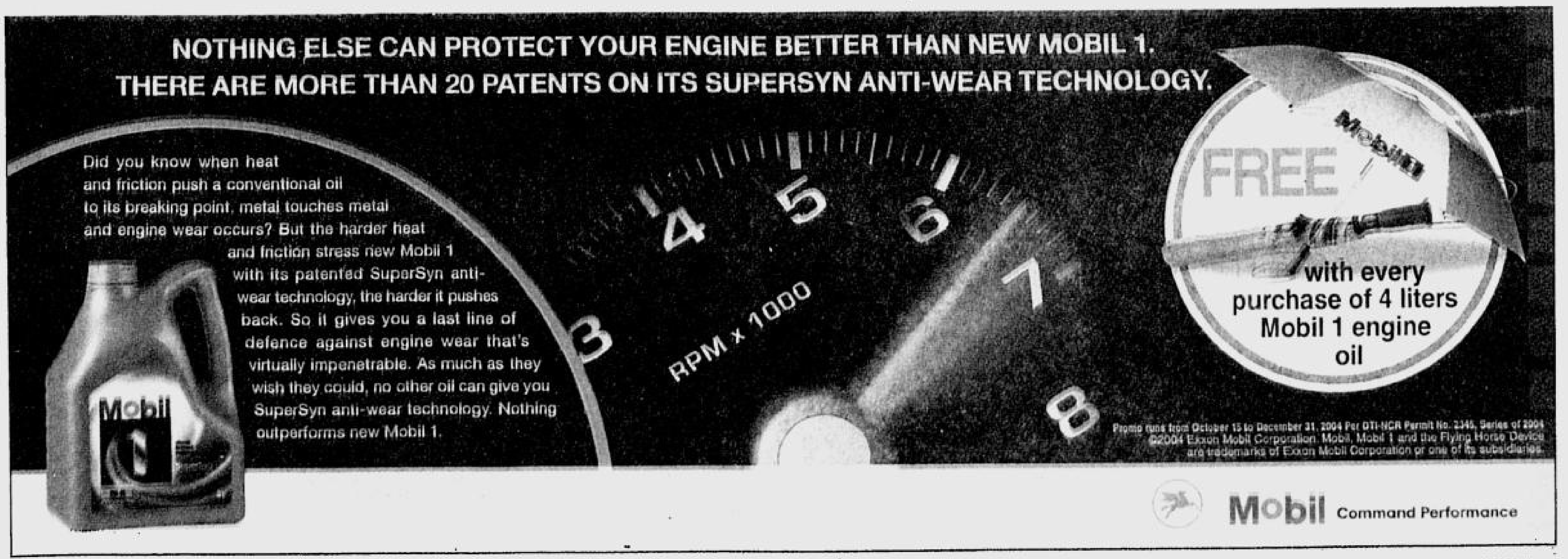
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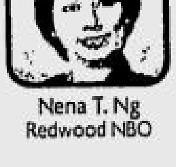

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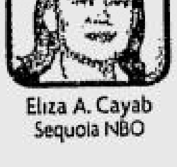

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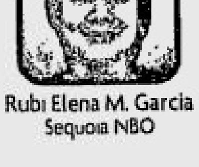

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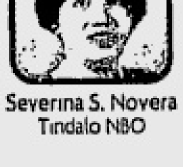

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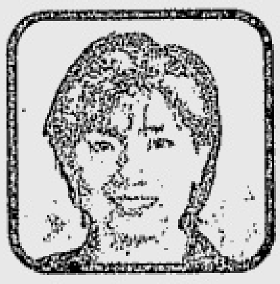

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Bush: Iraq bombers are having an effect

WASHINGTON—In a sobering assessment of the Iraq war, President George W. Bush acknowledged Monday that Americans' resolve has been shaken by grisly scenes of death and destruction and he pointedly criticized the performance of US-trained Iraqi troops. "No question about it," he said. "The bombers are having an effect."

Bush declined to criticize Russian President Vladimir Putin despite concerns that he has strengthened authoritarian controls and backtracked on post-Soviet democratic reforms. Bush said he has a good personal relationship with Putin and "I intend to keep it that way." The United States and Russia have disagreements, the president added, but he said the relationship is good.

The president also offered a warm testimonial for Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld in the face of spreading expressions of no-confidence by Republican senators. Rumsfeld appears "rough and gruff," Bush said, but "he's a good, decent man. He's a caring fellow."

For 53 minutes, Bush fielded questions on international and domestic affairs. It was his 17th formal news conference, held one day before he flies to the presidential retreat at Camp David for a vacation that will stretch into early next year and include a stay at his Texas ranch.

Bush spoke a day after the deadliest attacks in Iraq since July—killing at least 53 people in Najaf and at least 13 in Karbala—and six weeks before Iraqis vote for a transitional assembly that will choose a president and a government and draft a permanent constitution. American newspapers showed chilling pictures of rebels in the heart of Baghdad executing election workers in cold blood.

"And so the American people are taking a look at Iraq and wondering whether the Iraqis are eventually going to be able to fight off these bombers and killers," Bush said in perhaps his clearest expression of frustration with Iraqi forces. Bush's strategy calls for American troops to protect Iraq while local police and soldiers are trained to do the job themselves, eventually allowing the United States to withdraw.

BUSH at press conference

"Now I would call the results mixed in terms of standing up Iraqi units who are willing to fight," Bush said in a candid assessment. "There have been some cases where, when the heat got on, they left the battlefield. That's unacceptable. Iraq will never secure itself if they have troops that, when the heat gets on, they leave the battlefield." *AP*

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More than 50 arrested after car bomb attacks in Najaf, Karbala

NAJAF, Iraq—The governor of Najaf said that 51 people, including a non-Iraqi Arab national, had been detained after the bomb attacks in the Shiite holy cities of Karbala and Najaf that killed 66 and injured more than 200, as funerals were held for those killed in the Sunday bombings.

Gov. Adnan al-Zorfi told reporters the investigation had discovered a connection between the attacks that wreaked carnage at a funeral procession in Najaf and a packed bus station in Karbala.

"The message shows their resolve to destroy the unity of this country and to wage a sectarian war," said Interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi.

"We always said we will go to fight terrorism and we will continue to fight terrorism. We still have a lot of ground to cover," he added.

Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Said al-Hakim, one of the four senior Shiite clerics in Iraq, called on the Iraqi government to "put an end to these crimes and to arrest the evil-doers."

Shiite political figures cautioned that the attacks were aimed at scaring people away from voting.

Abdel Aziz al-Hakim, head of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, told reporters he had offered 100,000 men from his Shiite party's former militia to help protect polling stations and was awaiting an answer.

Meanwhile officials at the electoral commission in Baghdad spun a lottery drum with white balls numbered 101 to 365 to determine the ballot order for the political parties in the January election.

The lottery was conducted in the presence of the UN special envoy Ashraf Qazi, who drew the first ball from the drum.

And residents were told they can return to the war-ravaged city Fallujah starting Thursday.

The once-thriving city of 300,000 was virtually abandoned ahead of the November US military assault aimed at regaining control from insurgents. *AFP*

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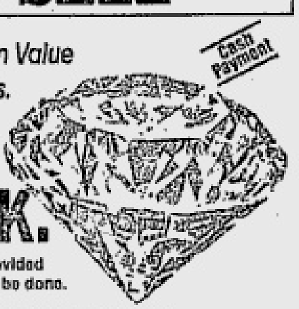

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Sharon defiant as settlers urge civil disobedience over Gaza plan

JERUSALEM—Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon vowed Monday that the threat of a civil disobedience campaign would not derail his plan to withdraw all Jewish settlers from the Gaza Strip by the end of 2005.

"The disengagement will be carried out according to the timetable that has been determined by the government and approved by the Knesset (parliament)," Sharon told journalists.

Prominent settler leader Pinhas Wallerstein called Sunday for those affected by the pullout to break through army roadblocks and barricade themselves in their homes, even if it means going to jail.

The influential Yesha settlers' council expressed Monday its "solidarity" with Wallerstein's call for civil disobedience.

Wallerstein's appeal came in the form of a letter sent round the settlements calling for active opposition to the withdrawal process.

"The public should violate the transfer law en masse and be ready to pay the price of mass imprisonment," the letter said.

He was referring to a bill which has passed its first reading in the Israeli parliament and aims to regulate the evacuation of 8,000 settlers from all 21 settlements in Gaza and four isolated enclaves in the northern West Bank.

It establishes compensation sums for settlers and punishments—hefty fines or imprisonment—that the Israeli government will be able to mete out to those failing to obey the law.

"I see these (Wallerstein's) remarks as harsh. I have known Pinhas for many years, I don't think that this is his way," Sharon said.

"I understand the pain, developments are painful for me too, but they are necessary. I am certain that we will do everything in order to uphold the law," he added.

The controversial Gaza plan has been fiercely opposed by many of Sharon's traditional supporters, leading to the crumbling of his coalition and leaving him without a parliamentary majority for the past six months.

But the governing Likud party has now all but signed a deal with the opposition Labor party that would give Sharon the political clout necessary to see the withdrawal through.

Talks had hit a final snag involving Labour leader Shimon Peres, slated to become a second deputy prime minister. *AFP*

Thailand says it has photos of militia training in Malaysia

BANGKOK—Thailand's government said Tuesday it has photo evidence of Thai Muslim separatists undergoing militia training in neighboring Malaysia, days after Malaysian officials angrily denied such claims.

Meanwhile, a Buddhist teacher was shot dead in Thailand's troubled south.

"We have the pictures to prove that they have militia training in Kelantan state," Thai deputy interior ministry Sutham Saengprathum told reporters. The southern Thai state borders Malaysia.

"If the Malaysian authority wants to have these (pictures) for their cooperation in investigating, we are pleased to give it to them," he said, without showing the alleged photos or saying how they were obtained.

Malaysia lambasted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra after he claimed last week that Thai militants were being trained in Malaysia, though without the Malaysian government's knowledge.

Indonesia also reacted angrily when Thaksin said the insurgents were being brainwashed by radical ideologies exported from Indonesia.

Also Tuesday, 52-year-old Buddhist teacher Manoon Kojahoon, was fatally shot in front of dozens of students in the southern province of Pattáni, said police Capt. Theerachote Promha.

Most Thais are Buddhists, but Muslims form the majority in the country's deep south, where an insurgency blamed on Muslim separatists has killed more than 570 people this year. *AP*

Naproxen risk deals third blow to US pain patients

WASHINGTON—US health regulators warned on Monday of heart risks connected to over-the-counter painkiller naproxen, creating additional confusion over the safety of similar drugs after recent warnings for two other painkillers.

Patients taking naproxen should not exceed the recommended dose and should not take the drug for more than 10 days unless directed by their doctor, the Food and Drug Administration said. The drug is sold as a generic and under several brand names, including Bayer AG's Aleve, and as Roche AG subsidiary Roche Palo Alto's Naprosyn.

The warning follows studies showing increased heart risks in two prescription painkillers. Merck & Co. Inc. withdrew its arthritis drug Vioxx in September. Pfizer Inc. has kept its arthritis medicine Celebrex on the market, but has suspended consumer advertising.

The recent burst of new data is unclear, at least one rheumatologist said, and doctors may have to closely match painkillers to patients based on their medical histories.

"It's really confusing for us and our patients," said Dr. Gregory Gardner, a rheumatologist who studies joint, muscle and bone-related diseases at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Naproxen and Celebrex are in a group of drugs called non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID), which include aspirin and ibuprofen. Within that group, Vioxx and Celebrex are part of a class known as Cox-2 inhibitors, along with Pfizer's Bextra.

Older drugs like aspirin can cause stomach bleeding and ulcers. Newer Cox-2s were designed to prevent such gastrointestinal side effects.

Some medical experts had suspected naproxen might have a beneficial effect on the heart.

When the first signs of a heart risk with Vioxx came to light in 2000, Merck argued the results were skewed by the protective effects of naproxen on other patients taking part in the trial.

Gardner said he would want to see more data on naproxen since it was thought to have a heart-protective effect. "I'm not sure I would change my practices based on a single study," he said.

FDA's latest warning stems from a National Institutes of Health-funded trial studying certain anti-inflammatory drugs in patients at risk for Alzheimer's disease. The trial, which included Celebrex, was halted late Friday after early results showed a higher risk of cardiovascular problems.

Celebrex showed "no significant increase" in risk for cardiac trouble or stroke in the trial, the NIH said. But lead researcher John Breitner, head of geriatric research at the Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System in Seattle, said it was tough to find patients willing to take the drug for the trial in the wake of Vioxx's withdrawal.

On Friday, Pfizer said a different NIH study investigating inflammation as a cause of cancer showed Celebrex more than doubled the risk of heart attack and strokes. That study was also halted. But another trial to see if the drug could prevent colon polyps did not show such risks, Pfizer said. *Reuters*

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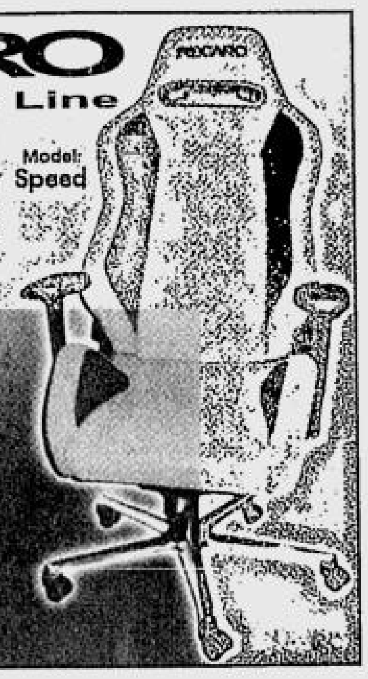

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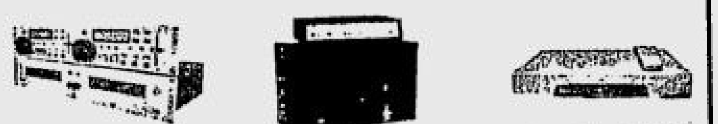

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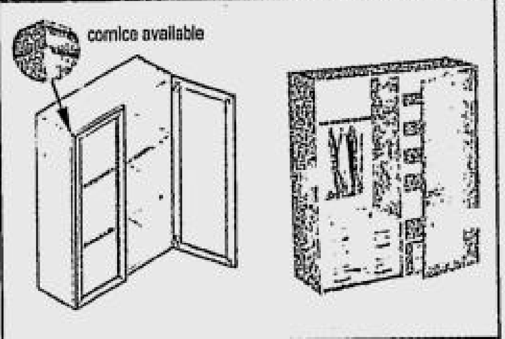

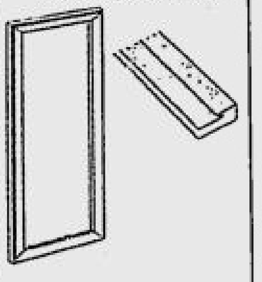

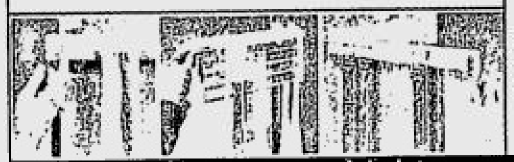

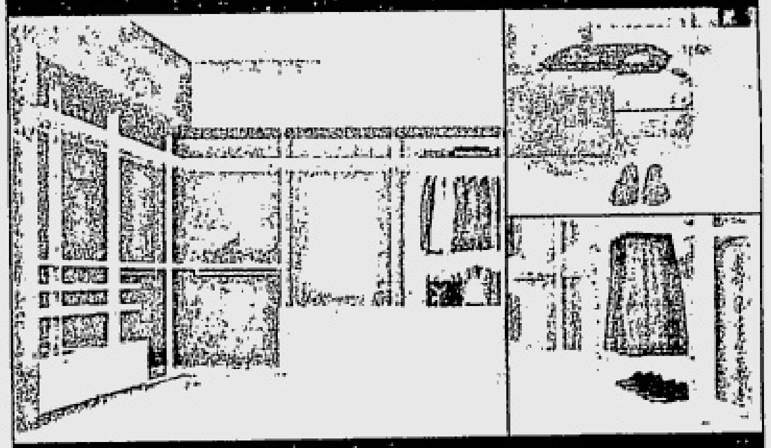

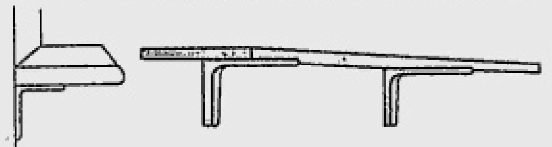

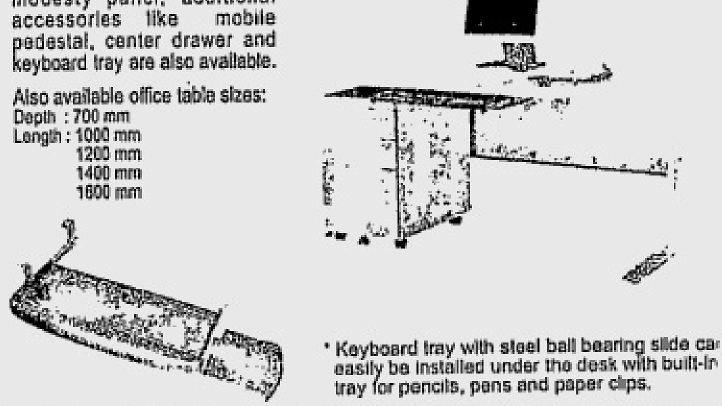

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China: Secession law aims to halt Taiwan independence

BEIJING—China said Tuesday a proposed antisecession law is aimed at preventing rival Taiwan from becoming independent, but refused to say whether it will set a deadline for the island to reunify with the mainland.

"The initiation of the antisecession law by China's National People's Congress has its sole purpose of containing Taiwan independence forces' separatist activities," foreign ministry spokesperson Liu Jianchao said.

Asked whether Beijing would impose a timeline for reunification and what measures it would take if Taiwan failed to comply, Liu declined to elaborate.

He insisted the law would help promote peace in the region.

"This action is beneficial to maintaining peace, stability and prosperity in the Taiwan Straits and the Asia-Pacific region," Liu told a regular briefing.

"The Chinese government's standpoint is to achieve peaceful reunification and One Country, Two Systems. This is the basic policy for achieving national unification."

Liu, however, reiterated China would not rule out the use of force.

"We will use our utmost sincerity and efforts to achieve the goal of peaceful unification, but we cannot bear Taiwan independence and will not allow any forces using any excuses or means to separate Taiwan from China," Liu said.

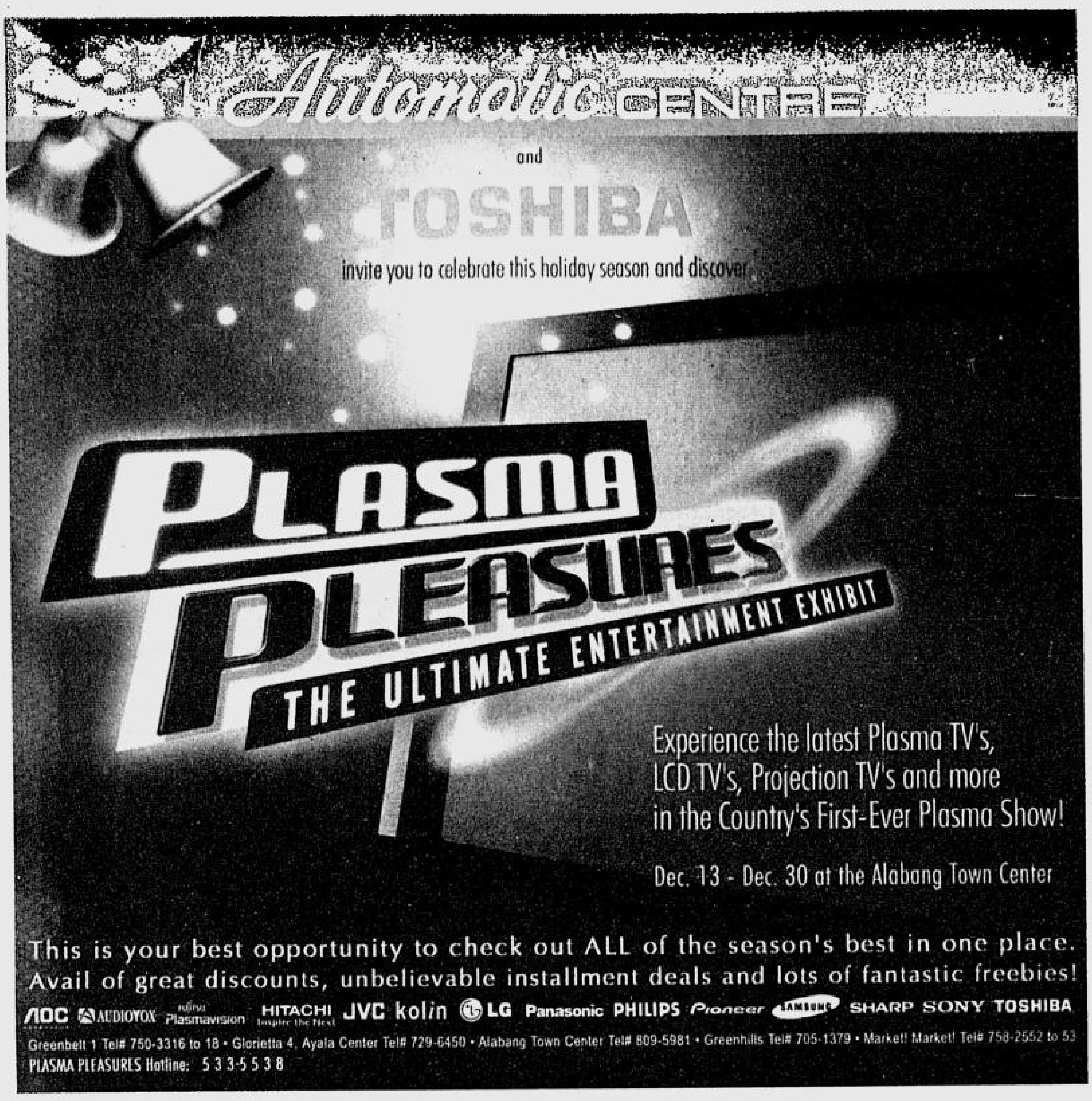
The Chinese government announced last week that the national legislature or National People's Congress would consider a draft antisecession law at its Dec. 25 to 29 meeting.

Sketchy reports in the state-run media had not previously mentioned Taiwan by name, and Liu's comments were the first identifying it as the target.

Taiwan split from mainland China in 1949 following a civil war.

But Beijing considers the island part of its territory awaiting reunification, and has repeatedly threatened to invade should Taiwan formally declare independence.

One Country, Two Systems is the formula under which Hong Kong and Macau were reunified with the mainland in 1997 and 1999. *AFP*



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Pinochet indictment, house arrest upheld

SANTIAGO, Chile—A three-judge panel of the Santiago Court of Appeals on Monday voted unanimously to uphold the indictment and house arrest of former dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet on human rights charges, according to Judge Juan Escobar, a member of the panel.

The appeal filed by Pinochet's defense "has been unanimously rejected," judge Juan Escobar said, prompting applause and cheers among relatives of victims of Pinochet's 1973-1990 regime awaiting for the decision at the court building.

However, Pinochet's lawyers said they would appeal to the Supreme Court within 24 hours.

Pinochet, 89, remained in a hospital intensive care unit Monday, recovering from a stroke he suffered Saturday morning.

He was undergoing a series of new tests and no date had been set for his release from the Santiago Army Hospital. He has recovered consciousness and mobility, which were seriously impaired by the stroke, but doctors say he may be left with some after-effects.

After visiting her father Monday, Pinochet's daughter, Lucia, said "he is doing better now, thank God. But he was real bad at one point."

Pinochet was indicted one week ago by Judge Juan Guzman, who charged him in nine kidnappings and one homicide during the 1973-90 dictatorship.

Small groups of foes and supporters of Pinochet demonstrated outside the court building in downtown Santiago as the three judges deliberated, but police kept them separated.

Guzman issued the indictment as part of his investigation into the so-called Operation Condor, a plan coordinated by the military dictatorships ruling in several South American countries in the 1970s and '80s to suppress dissent.

Pinochet critics, including lawyers for his accusers, claimed the sudden hospitalization was a ploy to avoid trial, a claim angrily rejected by those close to the retired general. *AP*

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Terror attack on LNG vessel could produce great injury, damage

By H. Josef Hebert

WASHINGTON—A terror attack on a tanker delivering liquefied natural gas at a US port could set off a fire so hot it would burn skin and damage buildings nearly a 1.6-km away, government scientists say in a report expected to influence where new multibillion-dollar terminals will be built.

The report from a government nuclear weapons lab, a 160-page unclassified version of which was obtained Monday by The Associated Press, characterizes an LNG tanker spill from a terror attack as a low probability. If successful, however, it would become "a high consequence event" that could produce massive injuries and property damage, the report said.

The yearlong study by scientists at Sandia National Laboratory, a premier federal research facility, provides the most detailed analysis to date of the potential public safety impact of a terrorist attack on an LNG transport tanker.

While the report does not recommend prohibiting tankers from carrying LNG through heavily populated areas, it says those shipments should occur only after "the most rigorous deterrent measures" are in place to reduce the probability of an attack.

The tankers, each of which carries up to 113.56 million liters of LNG, arrive every few days at four US terminals: Everett, Massachusetts, on Boston's outskirts; Cove Point, Maryland; and Elba Island, Georgia, and Lake Charles, Louisiana, on the Gulf coast. All are expanding as regulators weigh the merits of putting more than three dozen more such facilities at US ports, many in urban areas.

In its minus-162 degrees Celsius liquid state, LNG cannot explode and is not flammable. If a missile or explosive should tear a hole in a tanker or a storage tank, however, the escaping liquid would be transformed instantaneously into a gas and probably would ignite in a massive fire.

The Sandia report said terrorists, using readily available weapons and technology, could blast a 3-meter hole into the side of an LNG tanker.

The assessment evaluates a range of scenarios that would result in release of millions of gallons of LNG from a transport tanker. The scenarios include a takeover of a vessel by an insider or hijacker, external attacks using explosive-laden boats, triggered explosions or rocket-propelled grenades or missiles.

Under some circumstances an attack could produce cascading damage that could result in failure of as many as three of a ship's five LNG cargo tanks, which would increase the fire's intensity and lengthen its duration.

Detailed discussions of specific threats were included only in the classified version of the report, but the unclassified version examined the general impact such an attack and LNG fire on water would have to people within a 1.6-km of the spill.

"We are not recommending that there be any kind of 'no ship zone,'" said Mark Maddox, a deputy assistant secretary at the energy department, which commissioned the study. "What we've learned is that we can significantly reduce the likelihood of a terrorist attack occurring with security planning and mitigation."

Even with many details left out of the unclassified version, the report describes a harrowing potential for disaster if a terror attack were to succeed in releasing millions of gallons of LNG from a double-hulled vessel that typically carries more than 113.56 million liters of the frosty liquid fuel.

The Sandia scientists identified "several credible" terror scenarios that the report said would result in at least one—possibly as many as three—of a tanker's five cargo tanks being breached. That would ignite a pool of fire to spread several hundred meters in all directions, the report said.

While "the most significant impacts to public health" and the most severe destruction of buildings would be within a 500.5-meter radius of the fire, heat that could burn the skin and damage houses could extend to nearly a 1.6-km away.

The government study also confirmed the possibility raised earlier this year by some scientists that a breach of a cargo tank could cause a cascading of structural breakdowns in adjacent tanks and result in a larger release of LNG and a more intense and longer-lasting fire. Such a cascading event "cannot be ruled out especially for large spills," said the report. *AP*

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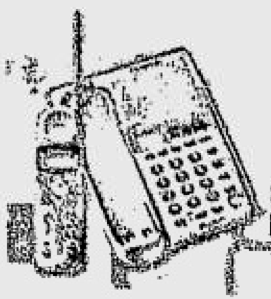

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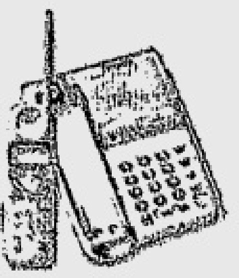

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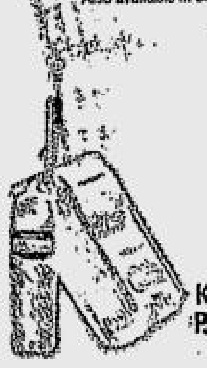

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•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
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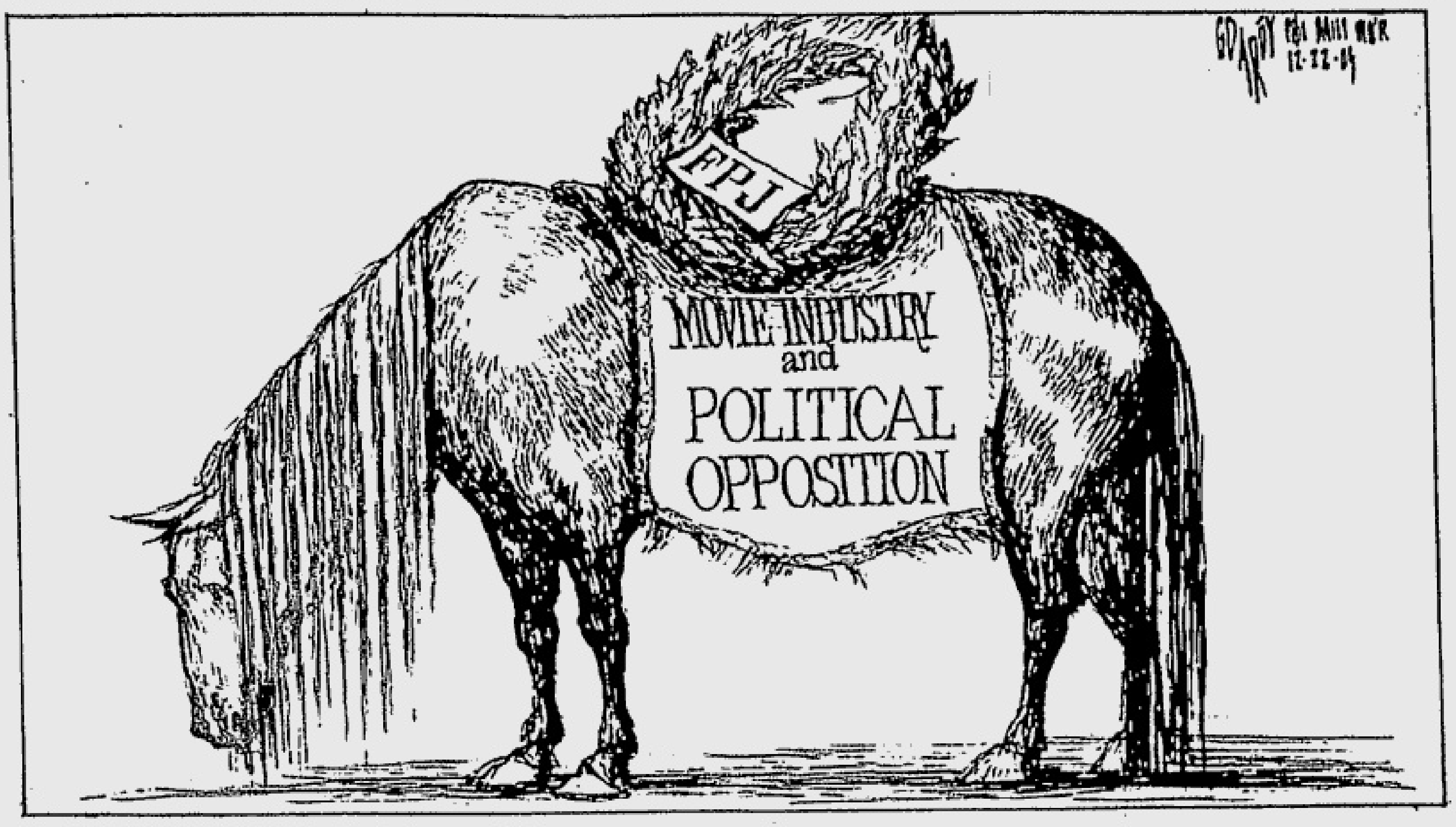

FPJ
MOVIE INDUSTRY and POLITICAL OPPOSITION

Long goodbye

EDITORIAL

THE PATH to the North Cemetery will be long. In the fresh, cold, crisp air, the legions will walk. Fernando Poe Jr.'s coffin, on a caisson, will be pulled by horses, but his fans, friends and family will walk. Recent days have been filled with statements from his widow Susan Roces and brother Conrad Poe, appealing to the people to escort Poe to his final resting place with dignity, respect and, above all, peacefulness.

We are sure that Filipinos from all walks of life and from all sides of the political fence will try to live up to that call. Beyond considerations of public order, there is the simple but profound consideration of giving to the dead what all the dead, rich or poor, famous or unknown, deserve: a final farewell that celebrates all that was beloved in a person.

The people that Poe loved—and who loved him back—proved in the past days, that they could pay him tribute without disgracing his memory. There were, to be sure, a few hotheads, and there was a minor stampede. But they were isolated incidents in a wake that was marked by the innate politeness and self-control of the Filipino.

Because Poe's funeral is a public occasion, it calls for public comment. The funeral itself will be grand without, as Conrad Poe himself said, being "*grandioso*" or grandiose. There will be pomp, but it will not be the pomp of the state. Instead, it will be the ritual of religion, and the ceremonial called for by Poe's way of life. There will be horses, which he loved, followed by the family he loved, surrounded by the people who love him, down the streets of a city he called his working home, to the cemetery where the tombs of his parents and brother await him. This is the Filipino way of death: full of symbols, rituals, meaning.

This is the question that faces so many people, as they bid Poe a final, and long, farewell. How will they give meaning to this final scene in a life that loomed so large in their own lives?

Whether attending the final, pre-dawn funeral Mass, or marching in the procession that may take up to six hours to wend its way from Santo Domingo Church to the North Cemetery, the wishes and example of Susan Roces must inspire Poe's fans. It is not only grief that must unite his fans and supporters, it must be the kind of self-control and discipline that has governed his wife through her days of public and private grief.

If much is expected—and asked—of Poe's loyal fans, the same, and even more, is asked of the police, the media and the officials of a government those fans and supporters resent and may even hate. Not everyone can be expected, in what will be a long and tiring funeral, to maintain his composure and self-control. The lines will be long. The crowds will ebb and flow. As crowds tend to be, this will have their own mind, even logic. The many will be at the mercy of a few, and it is how those few are treated—the hotheads, the shovers, the pushers, those temporarily blinded by passion and grief—that will dictate how the many will respond.

The Poe family has given every assurance that if it were up to them, the funeral would be emotional, but orderly. Unfortunately, their expectations and appeals can only go so far. They can only achieve so much. By their words and deeds, the public has every confidence that during the long farewell, their wishes will remain uppermost in the public's mind.

But after he is buried and the widow has gone home, and the pomp is done, there will still be the restless and grieving fans, the anxious and depressed supporters, of whom some people will want to take advantage. What Poe never wanted to do in life, some may try to do because of his death. The country and Poe's memory do not deserve such opportunism. Not now. Not ever. They cannot keep quiet in the face of a widow's express desire for peace, and then, when she has turned her back, turn her husband's supporters to thoughts of violence.

As the country takes to heart Susan Roces' appeals for peace and dignity at her husband's funeral, so must we make an appeal to her. Even after her husband is taken to his last resting place, may she not let politics turn a long goodbye into a farewell to the public peace and harmony she and her husband deeply desire.

Don't provoke mourners at FPJ funeral

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

Good night, sweet prince, (princess),
May flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.
—Hamlet by Shakespeare

AT SUNRISE today will begin the funeral march that will take Fernando Poe Jr. to his final resting place at the North Cemetery. By coincidence, the funeral for Ma. Kristina Casimira or "KC," beloved 16-year-old daughter of Speaker Jose and Gina de Venecia, will also take place a little later this morning.

High-ranking administration officials, the elite, will attend KC's funeral but the more numerous *masa* will be at the last rites for FPJ. Two persons, both beloved by their families and friends, struck down by tragedies the reasons for which only God can explain. A man and a young woman, belonging to feuding factions, called by God at the same time, a coincidence that reminds us of another Shakespearean tragedy.

Many people are skittish about the FPJ funeral. Although his family wants it to be solemn and dignified, and wishes that it not be used by anybody for politics, it could break out into violence. The police has prepared for groups which want to destabilize the administration. And opposition leaders have appealed to their followers not to use FPJ's funeral for political purposes. At last Monday's Kapihan sa Manila, opposition Senators Nene Pimentel Jr. and Alfredo Lim and former Rep. Mike Romero repeatedly called on FPJ's supporters to refrain from violence as he would not have wanted it that way.

Not that FPJ's supporters are planning to do just that. Still violence can break out spontaneously, without anybody planning it, if the police don't handle it right. The PNP has fielded 1,400 policemen for any eventuality. The danger is that with thousands upon thousands of mourners jostling to get a last glimpse of their idol, there is bound to be some pushing and shoving and the police will certainly try to keep order. If a policeman so much as pushes somebody back in line, it could provoke a crowd—already angry at the death of their hero, made worse by the impression that his death was caused by his depression at being cheated in the elections, and whose patience is worn thin by the long walk under the hot sun from the Sto. Domingo Church and by the crush of people—to retaliate.

The first impulse of the police is to push a crowd back and, when it becomes unruly, to hose it with water cannons or use tear gas. If that happens, all hell can break loose. Once a riot starts, it is hard to control. Hotheads can provoke the crowd, and groups can rampage and even try to storm Malacañang as they tried to do during Erap's presidency.

So it would be well for policemen not to lose their tempers. Keep cool, don't be provoked, use maximum tolerance. And FPJ's supporters should watch out for provocateurs in their ranks.

In his movies, FPJ played many characters with different names and different backgrounds, but they were all basically the same peaceful men. They reacted only toward the end to right a wrong and when they were pushed back against the wall by the villains. FPJ was such a peaceful man in real life. Don't sully his memory by fomenting violence on his last day on earth.

* * *

The talk now is what will happen to FPJ's electoral protest now that he is dead. There are two schools of thought. Pimentel told the Kapihan that he believes it died with FPJ. But Lim and Romero said the protest can, and should be, pushed to its logical conclusion. The people want to know who really won the election, Romero said. And it was the people who were cheated, not FPJ alone, Lim added. They were cheated out of their president.

As for its legality, some lawyers say there is a precedent. A losing mayoralty candidate and his teammate had filed an election protest against the winners. The protesting candidate died before the case was finished. Can his vice mayoralty candidate continue with the protest and take over the mayor's seat? Yes, said the Supreme Court, provided both of them won in the recount.

That is exactly the situation with FPJ and his vice-presidential team mate, Loren Legarda. FPJ is dead but Legarda can continue with the poll protest. If the recount shows that both FPJ and Legarda had won, the latter will become president.

But what if FPJ wins but not Legarda? In that case, Vice President Noli de Castro takes over as president.

Pimentel texted me as this column was being written to say that the sentiment in the opposition camp is to continue with the protest. The problem is now financial, he said.

* * *

Myther Bunag is reminding members of the Thursday Club that its Christmas party will be held tomorrow.

Meanwhile, there will be no Kapihan sa Manila on Dec. 27, 2004 and Jan. 3, 2005. The first Kapihan of 2005 will be on Jan. 10.

The Kapihan sa Manila's 20th anniversary show starring Willie Nepomuceno and his troupe will be held in February 2005. Tickets for the hilarious show at the Manila Hotel's Fiesta Pavilion will be on sale soon.

* * *

Today's jokes:

Vice President Noli de Castro is praying: "Dear Lord, *ang dasal ko po sa inyo ay kunin nyo na ang nanalong presidente. Bakit si FPJ ang kinuha nyo? Bakit Lord, sino ba talaga ang nanalo?*"

* * *

A friend sees Sen. Ping Lacson banging his head against the wall.

"*Bakit?* What is he doing?" the friend asks Lacson's aide who is standing by.

"He has been like that since FPJ died," replies the aide. "If he had accepted the offer to be FPJ's running mate, he would be president now."

Filipino

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

I FINALLY got to attend Fernando Poe Jr.'s wake last Sunday. Though I had seen and heard the sights and sounds in Sto. Domingo Church on TV, almost till they were coming out of my eyes and ears, I was not prepared for what I beheld.

The line of people queuing to pay their last respects to FPJ stretched from the gate of Sto. Domingo to several blocks away. I know that because I passed them down Quezon Avenue while looking for a place to park. Finding the task impossible, I turned around and headed back to my daughter's place in Roxas District. I left my car there and took a jeepney instead. I was glad I did. It didn't just make the journey to Sto. Domingo faster, it made the journey from one world to another possible.

It was certainly a different world from the one that surrounded Ninoy Aquino's wake. Both drew a huge crowd spontaneously, one that seemed to come from nowhere and was inexhaustible. But the smells were different.

Ninoy's wake resonated with grief and anger, the anger rising above the grief, which, almost unbidden, conjured the words, "*Tama na, sobra na, palitan na!*" FPJ's wake resonated as well with grief and anger, but with the grief rising above the anger, the crowd that gathered yoked together by a shared pain, an indescribable loss. No small thanks to Susan Roces, who demanded by personal example to rein in the political element. Maybe the explosion would come, but not from this. Not if the aggrieved widow could help it.

The physical smells were certainly worlds apart. The crowd that filed past Ninoy smelled of money and privilege, starch and cologne. The crowd that filed past FPJ smelled of earth and sandals, tenuous lives and fragile dreams. It was the rich and powerful with a sprinkling of the *masa* that turned out to grieve for Ninoy and curse the hand that dealt him a cruel blow. It was the poor and downtrodden with a sprinkling of the rich and powerful that turned out to grieve for FPJ and curse the hand that dealt him a cruel blow.

The crowd last Sunday waited patiently in line, those who had reached the church grounds getting balm for their pains with an old FPJ movie that played out from a *telon* that had been unfurled there. Maybe there were some diehard fans who had sought to escape life for a while by catching a glimpse of Da King as he lay lifeless inside the church. But they were the exception, not the rule. This was not a gaggle of giggly geese greeting tragedy with curiosity and laughter. These were folk that had to wake up the next day to drive the jeepney and ball the jack, spin the factory machines and pound the pavement to sell *chicharon*, and care for the babies while doing the laundry for themselves and others. These were people who had better things to do but who found nothing better that night than to say thank you to a man who had enriched their lives, defined the terms of their existence, and taught them to dream even as his own was snatched from him by a pickpocket who was not from Quiapo.

These were drivers and mechanics and clerks and dishwashers and waiters and students and public school teachers and housekeepers. These were ordinary folk. These were Filipinos.

I remembered again Susan Roces bitterly noting the irony of Malacañang offering to bury FPJ in the Libingan ng mga Bayani after making him out to be a non-Filipino. True, there could be no richer irony. I protested it early this year, provoking some of my friends to ask why I was defending FPJ when I balked at the thought of him becoming the president of this country. The answer was simple: it was injustice in the extreme. I might not have wanted him to become president, but I did not want him not to become president that way. Not all is fair in love and war.

If there was anyone who could justifiably claim to be the Filipino Everyman, it was FPJ. Mang Pandoy just happened to be poor and hungry, which is what physically the Filipino Everyman is. FPJ gave a face to the Filipino Everyman. For good or ill, he defined through the heroic roles he played the qualities Filipinos—though for the most part, male Filipinos—have aspired for: quietness, humility, physical and moral strength.

Arguably, legal technicalities do play a part in the determination of a person's citizenship. But in this country particularly, where law is often used to justify iniquity, they are not the most important thing of all. In any case, the legal technicalities against FPJ were merely manufactured. But even if they weren't so, enforcing them would have meant blotting out from all memory the last half-century of popular culture in this country.

The great unwashed did not go to FPJ's wake to mourn a movie star, they did so to mourn someone who had walked by their side in the journey of life, much as he had done in his movies. They came to mourn a *kuya*, a constant companion, a good man. They came to mourn someone who had lived as unobtrusively heroically in life as he had done in the movies: someone who helped others without drawing attention to himself, someone who got way up the road but who never forgot where he started, someone who never tried to pass himself off as something he was not. They came to mourn Panday, one who helped to build hope in their lives and kept it standing amid the lashing winds.

They came to mourn some of the best of what it meant to be Filipino.

* * *

My deepest thanks to the musicians and graphic artists and production people who made our benefit for the storm victims last Monday a huge success. It will take a whole column to write about them. My deepest thanks as well to those who went there and supported the cause. Your reward is the joy, or sigh of relief, you will give others this Christmas. May the world be as generous to you in your hour of need.

Crowd

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

ORGANIZERS of the funeral of Fernando Poe Jr. have not left any stone unturned to make it the biggest in the political history of this country. They aim to surpass the estimated two million-strong who marched behind the cortege of former Sen. Benigno Aquino after it left Sto. Domingo Church in his last journey to the cemetery. More than that, they have endowed the funeral with the pageantry associated with royal pomp and heraldry, including a caisson drawn by white horses, evoking images of a Buckingham Palace funeral for a fallen monarch, or of war heroes being buried at Arlington Cemetery.

From all indications, they will succeed in mounting a more massive funeral march than that of Aquino and staging a show that will likely draw the largest box office than all the films of Poe. All the countless admirers of Poe, whether they are his movie fans or his political supporters, are entitled to this lavish display of pomp and circumstance in contravention of his express wish that his funeral be simple, consistent with his own uncomplicated and straightforward life, which was dedicated to the depiction of the toils of the Filipino underdog against injustice, oppression, abuses and poverty.

Thus, the last wish of Poe is unlikely to be fulfilled by the pageantry that has been prepared for today's funeral, a ceremony that seeks to build a legend and a myth of Poe that attributes to him qualities he, in fairness to him, never claimed he possessed. His fans and idolatrous political supporters call him "Da King." But from instant biographies that have been crunched out following his death, the title is understood to refer to his movie roles, and now myth-builders have expanded the title to include his exploits in national politics.

Those who invested with medieval pageantry in Poe's funeral are fabricating an artificial world and culture in which Filipinos have not lived. We have not known kings in our young history as a nation. All we have suffered under were petty *datus* and tribal chieftains, notorious for their internecine warfare until the 1896 Philippine Revolution, the landmark of our turn toward nationhood. And even during the Revolution, the Filipino notables who captured local political offices did not lose their appetite for political assassinations—for example, that of Andres Bonifacio in Maragondon, Cavite.

One of the more extravagant claims that have sprung from the mourning for Poe is that the mammoth turnout during his wake is testimony to his having become a symbol of national unity—and as a unifying magnet, something he failed to do when he was alive. While giving Poe the dignity he deserves, it is critically important to dismiss this nonsense about his being an agent of national unity before it hardens into a pernicious myth that attributes many extraordinary qualities he did not possess.

No doubt, opposition politicians will march in the funeral with arms locked with their fellow politicians' from the opposite side, but to make out of this scene a symbol of unification is claiming too much. During the last election campaign, the opposition was a picture of disunity and disarray and up until the last days of the campaign, the Poe faction of the opposition was at loggerheads with the faction to which Sen. Panfilo Lacson and Makati Rep. Butz Aquino are identified. The opposition, post-Poe, is not any more united and cohesive than they were before his untimely death. Indeed, during the campaign, Poe was never a leader of the opposition. He was used as a front-man who was believed to have the best chance of defeating the administration's presidential candidate, because of his charisma derived from his movie roles.

If there is anything to be said at all about the massive outpouring for Poe, it is that the masses are mourning his passing and are showing it for a number of reasons, depending on how it affects their lives. The most erroneous reason is that the outpouring is an expression of protest over the results of a controversial and flawed election. It is therefore unrealistic to fan political unrest based on the assumption and the allegations that the election was stolen from Poe. Using the widespread public sympathy for Poe to foment unrest has as much foundation as staging a coup based on grievances of junior military officers disgruntled over corruption in the military concerning procurement of military supplies.

The turnout for Poe's wake prompts comparison with that for Aquino. It may well be true that more people will march for Poe's funeral than Aquino's. The latter's funeral was driven by outrage over his martyrdom. It was this outrage that sparked the long fuse of unrest that exploded in 1986 after smoldering for three years following his assassination in 1983.

Suppose more than two million people join Poe's funeral today (and that's entirely probable), what does that number mean? Does it represent deep-seated or widespread outrage? Does that mass represent a river of deep-seated grievances that can be tapped to generate political movements to launch another people power? The dynamics behind the Aquino martyrdom and funeral are different from those driving the funeral for Poe. Poe was not a martyr for a compelling political cause.

Organizers of Poe's funeral are staging a vast theater in the streets, a spectacle calculated to entertain the grieving multitudes and to redirect their grief toward another world of make-believe and pageantry and artificial characters Poe created in his movie roles.

Counting down

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

TV hosts have taken to counting down the number of days left before Christmas, but actually their count is a day late. For most Filipinos, the "real" Christmas celebration takes place two days from now, on the evening of December 24th, Christmas Eve, when most families gather for dinner and the exchange of gifts. The long and lively celebration is usually capped with a Midnight Mass, and then a midnight repast. Can you blame us if we feel Christmas Day comes as somewhat of an anticlimax?

By this time of the year, too, I'm sure most households would be caught up in a tizzy of preparations. Actually, I'm being kind, for "households" usually means the woman of the house, on whom responsibility for the emotional and social life of the family usually falls. Even if throughout my marriage I've tended to stray from the traditional boundaries of wifely and motherly work, meaning I hardly cook and rely on house help for much of the household maintenance, I've gladly taken on the usual womanly role when it comes to family celebrations. The role of family cheerleader and keeper of traditions is one I enjoy and savor, but sometimes, and this time of the year is a prime example, it can be more stress than it's worth.

These days find us in a particularly crazy state as we're just putting the finishing touches on a home renovation project. It began, innocently enough, with a wish to convert the garage (which we had been using as a storage room for junk) into my office (to free the hubby from having to sleep with the detritus of a busy journalist's life), then expanded into a plan to build our son's bedroom above it. And then, as my sister-in-law and her husband, our contractors, explained it, his old room's walls would be knocked down so we could have a bigger entertainment area. As the weeks passed, we also began nursing dreams of establishing a pocket garden in our walkway, the better to increase what real estate agents call our house's "curb appeal."

As a result, what was envisioned as a month-long project is now nearing three months, with our original budget doubling and then tripling, our wish list and shopping list expanding and lengthening along with our fantasies of a "showcase" home.

* * *

FOOLISHLY, I also volunteered to host our clan's Christmas Eve dinner and program. I admit I was seized by a desire to show off my home's "new" look. But this also means that for the last few days our home has been caught in a whirlwind of cleaning, dusting and hauling out all sorts of household junk. It's incredible the amount of stuff a couple and family accumulates over the course of 26 years!

Digging through a seemingly unending pile of books, to be divided into "to keep" and "to give away," I wondered out loud if I ever had the time to read all of them and why on earth I had bought and collected so many! Distressingly, the black garbage bags of books "to keep" seem to outnumber the bags "to give away." There goes the hubby's fantasies of a minimalist lifestyle!

Still, the craziness will come to an end on Friday evening when, I hope, our home will for the moment be clear of dust and dirt, the floors waxed, the furniture polished. Then these frantic preparations would have been all worth it, as our extended family gathers to relive a tradition that has sustained us through the years. I just have to make sure no one peeks into our planned "music room" and espies the garbage bags with contents still waiting to be sorted!

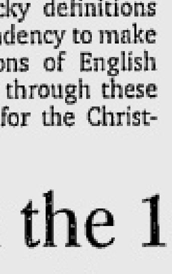
* * *

HERE'S an early Christmas gift for you (and me!) that I downloaded from our pagbabago e-group. See how much sense these wacky definitions make, based on the very Pinoy tendency to make fun of our twisted pronunciations of English words. A few laughs to see you through these frantic last-minute preparations for the Christmas bash…

"The pinoy does it again!
Contemplate—Kulang ang mga pinggan
Punctuation—Pera para maka-enrol
Ice Buko—Nagtatanong kung ayos na ang buhok
Tenacious—Sapatos na pang tennis
Calculator—Tawagan kita mamaya
Devastation—Sakayan ng bus
Protestant—Tindahan ng prutas
Statue—Ikaw ba 'yan?
Tissue—Ikaw nga!
Predicate—Pakawalan mo ang pusa
Dedicated—Pinatay ang pusa
Aspect—Pantusok o pandurog ng yelo
Deduct—Ang pato
Defeat—Ang paa (ng pato?)
Detail—Ang buntot (ng pato?)
Deposit—Gripo (Call DIPLOMA if DEPOSIT is leaking)
City—Bago mag-utso; A number to follow 6
Cattle—Doon nakatila ang Hali at Leyna
Persuading—Unang Kasal
Depress—Ang nagkasal sa PERSUADING
Defense—Ginamit ng mga pangsulat sa kontrata sa PERSUADING
It depends—Kainin mo ang bakod
Shampoo—Bago mag-labing-isha (11)
Delusion—Maluwang (kapag maluwang ang damit, eh DELUSION)
Delivery—Walang bayad. Kapag working lunch, eh DELIVERY na ang tanghalian
Profit—Patunayan mo
Backlog—Bacon saka egg
Beehive—Magpakatino ka
CD-ROM—Tingnan mo ang kwarto
Debug—Ang ipis
Defrag—Ang palaka
Defense—Ang bakod
Defer—Ang balahibo
Deflate—Ang plato
Detest—Ang eksamin
Devalue—'Yon ang susunod sa letrang V
Devote—Ang boto
Dilemma—Brownout! a!
Effort—'Dun nagla-land ang efflane
Forums—Apat na kwarto
July—Nagsinungaling ka ba?
Thesis—Ito ay…"

'Noche buena' in the 1920s

LOOKING BACK



Ambeth R. Ocampo

A FEW weeks back, readers (especially expat Filipinos for whom Christmas can be most lonely) wrote and e-mailed to thank me for the mouth-watering remembrance of *duman* and the Christmas table in my favorite aunt's house in San Fernando groaning with all the gastronomic Kapampangan delights that make the food in this region rivaled but unsurpassed. My conscious appreciation for the food of my paternal relatives resulted from my association with the late E. Aguilar Cruz (whose portrait now hangs beside that of his wife on the ground floor of the original Café Adriatico in Malate). Long before Doreen Fernandez became the doyenne of food writing in the Philippines, it was "Abe" Cruz who was often interviewed on things gastronomic. He shared his own memories of *noche buena* in the 1920s with Ching Alano as follows:

"The *noche buena*…was a comparatively light meal…For a slightly above average family, standard *noche buena* fare was a heartwarming affair with *fideos* [translated by the interviewer as "vermicelli" though it actually is the thick and round macaroni-type noodles found in soup], or in its absence there usually was *nilagang manok*. The main dish was *rellenong manok*…They called it the main dish because it was at the center of the table, because it was stuffed. It was rare that they had stuffed turkey because, in the first place, it was hard to find turkey [from my own experience I would presume that turkey was not the fowl of choice because it was bland, somewhat like having a supersize piece of white meat when most Filipinos will throw cholesterol caution out the window and opt for dark meat] and it was hard to bake. So they settled for *rellenong manok*.

"To tell you frankly, I don't remember our taking fish [during *noche buena*]. In those days bread was a real treat which usually came before the rice…besides the rice menu there was a *tinapay* menu. The popular bread then was the Pan Americano… [Other things on the Christmas table were:] *jamon de funda* from Australia, a must for native bourgeois Christmas, and so-called because it was wrapped in cloth that made it look like a pillow case, *queso de bola* or edam cheese, chestnuts, apples, and grapes…so you see it was more modest than what we see in magazines and on TV today."

Cruz's list of dessert started with his all-time favorite *kalamay ube*, followed by the usual: *malagkit, suman* and *leche flan*, not necessarily in that order.

When I interviewed him, nursery rhymes from his childhood came flooding back from memory. Aside from food, it was from Cruz that I rediscovered the language of my father, which I was discouraged from using by my Tagalog mother who feared it would give me the infamous *Kafamfangan* accent as well as future pronunciation problems with my f's, p's and e's.

While talking of food as my heritage, Cruz started to recite: "*Isa adwa bibingka/ atlu kapat patupat/ lima anam suman/ pitu walu bobotu/ siyam apulo ginilo.*" You don't have to be Kapampangan to guess that this is a counting rhyme that ends with various types of food: *bibingka* is the rice-cake served with grated coconut meat (*niyog*) or some syrup or sugar; *suman* is the delicacy made from glutinous or sticky rice wrapped in different types of leaves (usually coconut) rolled or folded to form various shapes and sizes; *patupat* is a *suman* variety served with sugar or *latik*, that is a sweet preparation made of cooked and sweetened coconut milk; *boboto* is better known in other areas as *tamales*; and *ginilo* is coconut milk served cold with *gulaman*, the closest one can get to the refreshing Spanish drink *horchata*.

All the foods above remembered by Abe Cruz are just about the same things I remember from my childhood and which will be remembered by my nephews and nieces who go to lunch in San Fernando, Pampanga, once a month (when I was growing up this was every Sunday plus long vacations in the summer) and pine for the simple uncomplicated food that only my aunt's cook seems capable of dishing out. Unlike older, more affluent families who had special cooks hired for special meals or dishes, the only thing that seemed out of the ordinary for me was the *buco* sherbet that was not bought off a supermarket shelf but scooped out of a large wooden *garapinera* filled with salt and ice. I never got around to studying the contraption because I was distracted by this sweet crystallized and fine *buco* juice frozen to perfection.

Interviews with those who had a "*dulce* cook" or someone who specialized in sweets are something worth exploring again. I heard of a certain "Apung Pedro" of Bacolor whose *pièce de résistance* in an assortment of sweets was a concoction made from eggs which he steamed and shaped in a round *llanera*. When it was cooked and solid, he placed it on a tray and sliced it to form a flower, which was said to look like a dahlia with each petal garnished with cherries and poured over with a secret recipe syrup. When this beautiful edible flower had absorbed the sauce, it was ready to eat. Unfortunately, my informant had no name for it and only remembered that it was good.

Some day I may yet embark on a new line of research, do my mother's dream book on Filipino *kakanin* from north to south, and thus preserve part of our gastronomic heritage.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Child safety and the holidays

CHILDREN are the ones who most enjoy Christmas and New Year celebrations, but the recent tragedy that struck the De Venecia family reminds us, too, how the holiday celebrations actually put our children at great risk of injury and even death.

The toll of young lives is bound to continue to increase over the next few days, so I thought of compiling, based on the problems we've had in previous years, a few safety reminders to help prevent some of these tragedies.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Fiery lights

Christmas lights have been getting cheaper each year because of imports from China. It's amazing how cheap these lights have become. The last two years, I've been buying some of my lights from Divisoria but have noticed that the wires are really much too thin and that many conk out after a few days. The De Venecia fire has convinced me there's too much risk with these cheap lights, but mind you, some of the more expensive sets I got from the upmarket outlets weren't that durable either, making me wonder if our Department of Trade and Industry sets standards for the importation of these products.

Also watch out with those Christmas lanterns, especially those made of paper. Still I'd check the wiring and bulb sockets of *capiz* lanterns.

Follow the advice being given by government agencies about getting lights with parallel connections, and about not overloading the lights. One hardware clerk gave me this additional safety tip: it's better to get lights that blink, rather than those that stay on constantly. Obviously, it's the latter that heat up and burn out all too quickly.

Government warnings have concentrated on the lights, but I'd also be careful about another source of fires: substandard extension plugs and cords. About two years ago, I bought an extension cord from China and it went up in smoke, literally, within a week. Fortunately, the computer equipment plugged into the extension remained intact.

Christmas trees

The lights become extra hazardous when they're on Christmas trees, especially artificial ones. A short-circuit in the wiring can send out sparks and start a conflagration. It's best then to turn off the lights—whether on Christmas trees or not—before the household goes to bed, or when they're unattended.

If there are very young children at home, I'd be even more cautious and avoid putting lights on the trees or any place within reach of the kids. I was carrying a five-month-old baby the other day, while sitting next to a Christmas tree, when the tree came crashing down. I knew she was attracted to the lights the minute we walked into the room, and as we drew closer to the tree, she became even more fascinated because of the ornaments. As babies go, all it took was a split-second, one unguarded moment, as I spoke to friends, for her to pull on one of the branches. Fortunately, I was carrying her so all she had was a bad fright.

It's not just the lights then that we need to watch out for but also the ornaments and the tree itself. The artificial ones made out of plastic or aluminum are very light and are easily knocked over, so it's best to reinforce the base.

No safe firecracker

Besides the lights and trees, we should be extra careful with firecrackers. In many parts of Metro Manila, kids are already roaming the streets setting off firecrackers. The health secretary came out a few days ago to warn about firecrackers, but the mass media have been slow to pick up those advisories.

I just feel there is no firecracker safe enough for use with children around. Even sparklers, for example, can cause minor burns and as you move into the larger and more powerful firecrackers, you run additional risks, from fingers being blown off to firecracker shrapnel flying into the air and hitting someone.

Each year television channels provide us with gory and bloody scenes of firecracker injuries being treated in hospitals but many people are also unaware of the invisible effects of these firecrackers: the sulfur in these firecrackers pollutes the air for hours and can be very problematic for kids (and adults) with chronic respiratory problems—asthma, for example.

We also don't get to see the effects of a particularly deadly firecracker which has been banned, but which continues to be sold: watusi, those tiny pellet-sized firecrackers which you step on to activate. Unused pellets left on the ground can be picked up by infants, very young children and let's not forget, our pets, and in previous years we've had deaths from ingesting them.

Holiday-licious food and gifts

Generally, the holiday season means higher risks of children ingesting small items besides the watusi. Just the other day, I was in a relative's home, watching young toddlers play on the floor. Fortunately, one of the mothers noticed tiny white beads strewn on the floor. She quickly picked them up and traced where they were coming from. It turned out one of the little girls was wearing a "pearl" necklace with a broken strand.

Young children might mistake these tiny objects for candy and swallow them. In other cases, children, especially babies, are just plain curious and will put anything in their mouth. Many toys sold locally have inadequate warnings about small parts which can be wrenched off, or which drop off, and might end up being swallowed.

I'd also be careful about food. Older people tend to be more conscious now about cholesterol and fat in their holiday food, and then forget that we need to watch what the kids are eating. Food with peanuts, even those cooked in peanut oil, should not be given to infants because they may have a peanut allergy. With older children, I'd also watch out for nuts in general and other food items that can get stuck in the throat. In Taiwan, there are warnings about those gelatin cups which you "pop" into the mouth. Even if they're soft, they can still end up being lodged in a child's throat.

If you're trying to instill good eating habits in your children, remember all those parties will be full of temptations as well—soft drinks, sweets and various snack items especially. As to teenage children, don't forget to warn them about alcohol. It's a challenge to parents to keep kids off the junk and find ways to provide foods that are, in the words of my partner, holiday-licious but healthy.

And Bantay, too

Oops, one of my dogs is staring at me, so allow me a postscript. The holidays will mean lots of chocolate, which you should never, never give to Bantay. Dogs lack a digestive enzyme to break down some of the substances in chocolate which are toxic to them, sometimes fatally. And while I'm at it, let me warn you, too, against giving dogs chicken bones, nuts and other stuff that might cause choking.

Let's keep the holidays safe for all our loved ones, human and non-human.

LETTERS

'Weakness for titles' not solely Filipino trait

IN HIS column titled "A weakness for titles" (PDI, 12/4/04), former Justice Isagani Cruz was at it again—his derision of the Filipino.

"One of the character flaws of the Filipino is his weakness for titles," he said. "Everyone must have a title or honorific to distinguish himself from others." And he cited such common titles as *kuya, ate, diko, ditse, bunso, manong, manang* and *aling*, and high-sounding ones like Atty., Engr., and Dr.

Kuya, ate, diko, ditse, manong, manang and *aling* are used to render respect to the elder members in the family, community, and society; and this is not only a Filipino custom. Other nations also practice it. *Kuya, ate, diko and ditse* are even copied from the Chinese. *Manong and manang* are variations of the Spanish *hermano* and *hermana*.

Just because the Americans don't have them, it's already a flaw for us Filipinos? What about their mother country, Britain? It has kings and queens, princes and princesses, dukes and duchesses, lords and ladies, barons and baronesses, baronets and knights, who are addressed as Your Majesty, Your Highness, Your Royal Highness, Your Grace, My Lord, My Lady, Sir, or Dame. Just because the British have them and we don't, it's already a character flaw for the British?

The Spaniards have *rey* and *reyna, don* and *doña* and *señor* and *señora*. The Indians have *maharajah, maharani, mahatma,* and *mogul*. The French have *monsieur* and *mademoiselle*. They are not character flaws; they are virtues, cultures and heritage. They are a form of decency.

Professional titles are used for various reasons. One, to advertise services so that people will know where to go when they need them. If I'd just been robbed, I'd run to PO1 Atras Abante, not to Atty. Apela, Dr. Saquitin, or Engr. Giba. Second, to give people trust and confidence. When I'm in a dental or medical need, I'd enter a clinic run by one who is a D.D.M. or an M.D., and I'd try to find his college diploma, graduation picture and license inside his clinic because I don't want anyone to just dissect my teeth, gums and body. Third, it's done universally. No one can tell me that there is a nation whose professionals hide their hard-earned expertise.

Cruz should not wonder why some occupations are not advertised, as in Tubero Aguas or Sastre Pantalones, because it's not usually practiced. And it's the privilege of only the very exceptional people, like Panday Pira and Pilosopo Tasio.

—JON E. ROYECA,
Block 8 Lot 18,
Kalayaan Village,
1300 Pasay City

Life after the 'Da King'

DA King is dead. Long live Da King!

This seems to be the feeling of almost everyone grieving over the untimely death of Fernando Poe Jr.

He could have been, nay, he should have been the country's president. When he "lost" the election, not a few supporters thought that God had another plan for him. But we expected it to unfold during his lifetime.

Who could question God's infinite wisdom in taking him away when his country still needs him? In his death FPJ may yet unify our divided nation.

Many will soon forget him. "*Sic gloria transit mundi.*" So passes glory (not Gloria) in this world. But for those whose lives he touched, he will live in their hearts for a long, long time.

His death should remind us to continue the help he extended to countless others in his own silent way, devoid of any publicity or fanfare.

Life must go on, even as we continue searching for another hero to save the nation.

—ARCHIMEDES S. MARQUEZ,
420 Gov. A. Pascual St.,
San Jose, Navotas, MM

Fading GMA billboard

MANY years have gone by since a huge billboard was erected near the end of the unfinished Manila-Cavite Coastal Road, announcing to the whole world that President Fidel V. Ramos and Sen. Ramon Revilla Sr. would soon finish this project started by President Ferdinand Marcos. A few months after the billboard was put up, a typhoon smashed it down. With it vanished the Ramos-Revilla ballyhoo, which was soon forgotten.

Many, many months have gone by since President Macapagal-Arroyo erected her own giant billboard—almost on the same spot where the R-R commercial had stood—announcing the same old promise: the completion of the Manila-Cavite Coastal Road, which would surely ease the horrible traffic in Bacoor and Imus, Cavite. As yet, no typhoon has struck down President Arroyo's advertisement, and this is probably because, unlike R-R, she has started reclaiming the seashore of Bacoor. But that's all—started.

The last time I, a Bacoor resident, saw Ms Arroyo's pre-election promise, only about 200 meters of the seashore had been filled with gravel—the same condition it has been since last summer when she vowed to finish what R-R had failed to do.

The way it looks, Caviteños may have to wait till "kingdom come" before they—I mean, their great-grandchildren—will see and enjoy the finished Coastal Road.

Meanwhile, Ms Arroyo's portrait on the billboard is fading—and fading fast like her popularity.

I hope that we Caviteños won't wake up one morning to find Ms Arroyo's billboard gone.

—MAXIMINO NOBLE III,
3/F Prudential Bank Bldg.,
2182 Chino Roces St., Makati City

Pro-democracy award favors feudal aristocracy

THE WASHINGTON-BASED National Democratic Institute (NDI) should recall the W. Averell Harriman Democracy Award it gave to former Philippine President Corazon Aquino, unless it is its intention to honor world leaders whose hands are stained with the blood of victims of mass murders. The god of history and justice will condemn the NDI if it insists in giving her this pro-democracy award. The NDI would be committing one of its biggest mistakes if it pursues honoring Ms Aquino.

It was during her presidency that the Mendiola Massacre, Lupao Massacre and Paombong Massacre happened. Ms Aquino cannot escape responsibility for the Nov. 16 Hacienda Luisita carnage, which was perpetrated in conspiracy with the Arroyo administration, using police and military personnel.

Ms Aquino and the Cojuangco clan to which she belongs will only use the pro-democracy award to change the public outrage against their family over the Hacienda Luisita massacre.

As far as we are concerned, the Cojuangcos' feudal aristocracy and their political flirtation with the Arroyo administration have been exposed to the public.

—GERRY ALBERT CORPUZ,
information officer,
Pamalakaya, 18-A Mabuhay
Street, Central District, QC

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Tanong ng Bayan ABC Tuwing Huwebes, 10:00pm

I-text ang inyong "fearless view" sa 2910. Pipiliin namin ang pinakamagaling na sagot. Ang premyo linggo-linggo: isang 21" color TV set!
I-type: INQTV <ang inyong sagot>, <buong pangalan>, <siyudad o probinsiya>, tapos ipadala sa 2910. Cut-off time: WEDNESDAY, 6 PM. Winner will be identified during the InqTV program: Thursday, 10:00pm, on ABC.

text 2910

Pasko sa taghirap, dapat pa bang magpasarap?

Nanto ang ilan sa mga sagot ninyo. Text na!

"ignore crisismas but unite for christ mass"
Fortuno Baawa, La Trinidad, Benguet

"oo, sanay na tayo sa hirap nararapat lang na magdiwang sa araw ng kapaskuhan wag natin hayaang kalungkutan ang maghari sa mundo"
Colin Tupaz, Tacloban City

InqBox Question of the Week

What are your hopes and dreams for your family this Christmas and the New Year?

Win this "Inquirer T-shirt!

Senders of d first 10 texts publishd in Tuesday's InqBox wiL each receiv an "Inquirer T-shirt!Ü

inquirer news name/city/message:
[illegible]
(Maximum of 160 characters)
*Metro Manila winners can call Chay at 897.8808 loc. 218. Provincial winners can text: inquirer ad name/city/mailing address to 2207 or 283 as their prizes will be mailed to them.

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3 killed as bus plows through homes

SORSOGON CITY—Three persons were killed while six others were seriously injured after a bus plowed through their houses shortly before midnight Monday.

Police investigators identified the fatalities as Geraline Doctor, 10, Edraline Doroja, 9, and Mario Adriatico, 40, all of Barangay Cabid-an, this city.

All died on the spot.

Police said the bus, with plate number HVM 317, owned and being operated by St. Christopher Bus Line, was traveling from Ormoc City to Manila when the accident happened at around 11:30 p.m.

Police said the driver could have fallen asleep causing the bus to swerve to the opposite lane and ram through two houses just along the national highway.

Investigators failed to get the identity of the driver and two other bus crewmen as they fled the scene.

Those injured were identified as 6-month-old baby JR Derit, Jerryson Derit, 3, Alicia Duran, Noribel Doroja, Gina Doroja and Norman Doroja.

They were rushed to the Saints Peter and Paul Hospital by Gov. Raul Lee himself, who was near the accident site at that time.

None of the bus passengers was injured.

"I can vividly recall what happened," said Ramil Rabucarsal, a passenger.

He said he noticed the driver was sleepy and also saw a pedicab in front of the bus as it sped.

The bus hit the pedicab, killing its driver instantly.

"I hid under a chair," said Rabucarsal, as the bus started to make its way to the houses.

"I felt the windshield crash and the passengers were shouting and we were in a dark place. It was so fast."

He said that he knew before the accident that the driver was suffering from rheumatism.

"He can't even walk properly. But I knew he could still drive," he said.

Andy Barcena, 21, said it was an early Christmas gift for him and his pregnant wife that they were spared from the accident.

He was the owner of the first house hit by the bus.

"I didn't feel good yesterday. It seemed that it was so hot in my place, so I decided to sleep with my in-laws. If my wife did not agree, maybe we could be one of the fatalities."

According to Gina Doroja, a fruit vendor in Sorsogon City and owner of the second house, they were already sleeping together with her children when the bus just hammered their wall made of light materials.

It landed exactly in their bedroom.

"At first, I thought it was just a dream or somebody with mighty force just pushed me away. I gained my consciousness in the hospital."

Gina, whose daughter Edraline died, also suffered from bruises, broken bones and is paralyzed from the hip.

"I guess heaven had shed some pity on us," said Jason, son of Gina who lives with his foster parents, 3 km away from their house. *Bobby Labalan and Jerico Lagonoy, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Police seize 300 kg of bomb ingredients

PAGADIAN CITY—Maritime police authorities seized several bags of ammonium nitrate aboard a ship from Jolo that docked here early morning Tuesday.

The 12 bags of fertilizer, which is also a main component in bomb-making, was misdeclared as dried fish.

The seizure came in the wake of a heightened alert over reports of planned attacks by terrorists in Mindanao.

Insp. Abner Santos, Maritime police chief, said based on the registry of MV Nickel Princely, the cargo's shipper and consignee was a Mr. Albani.

He said Albani boarded the ship from Jolo around 9:30 a.m. on Dec 19.

Santos said the shipment, consisting of 300 kilograms of ammonium nitrate, was to be transferred to ML Aida 7, a wooden-hulled vessel bound for Cotabato City when Maritime police authorities decided to hold and inspected it.

He said they became suspicious of the cargo because "from the looks of it, the contents are not dried fish."

During inspection, Santos said they found out that the contents were "granules," later found out to be ammonium nitrate based on the description of the bags that encased it inside the sacks.

Alert

Santos said they dispatched an alert for the shipper but he was nowhere to be found.

"The chemical could be intended for terrorists planning to bomb key cities in Mindanao," Santos said.

Police and military authorities in Mindanao have been on heightened alert following the Dec. 12 explosion that killed 15 people and wounded several others in a public market in General Santos City.

Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza, Southern Command chief, said the Abu Sayyaf was behind the attack.

As this developed, President Macapagal-Arroyo named Mayor Rodrigo Duterte as her antiterrorism czar.

On Sunday, Duterte said he still has to know what his actual role would be but hinted he was willing to facilitate peace discussions with all armed groups in Mindanao, including the Abu Sayyaf that has links with international terrorist groups.

"If the appointment will result in more support in terms of funding, resources and equipment, that would greatly help the maintenance of peace and order in Mindanao especially Davao," Davao City Councilor Diosdado Mahipus said.

On the fear that it would trigger more terrorist attacks in Davao City to challenge the mayor's capacity to solve terrorism, Mahipus said Duterte has to choose what is more beneficial to the city.

And because the city is "facing a faceless enemy," Mahipus said it would be better to give Duterte the responsibility because "this will allow him to tap resources that will be used in protecting the city and the rest of Mindanao."

Duterte has been known to take an iron-fist policy toward crime in the city and was reported to have been behind a rash of executions of crime suspects, particularly drug dealers. *Hernan de la Cruz with a report from Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

[illegible]

RURAL LULL
Mother and daughter keep each other company in Garchitorena, Camarines Sur, one of the poorest towns in the country. Residents of the town rely on fishing for their livelihood.

Burglars take off with ₱450,000 from bank

TAGBILARAN CITY—Burglars struck over the weekend, taking P450,000 in cash from the First Consolidated Bank (FCB) branch in Loon town, about 28 km north of this city.

A still unidentified janitor discovered the burglary before 8 a.m. on Monday when he arrived at the bank and noticed an open window at the back.

The FCB Loon branch is on the national highway in front of the town plaza.

A bank official who declined to be named confirmed the stolen amount based on initial estimates conducted by an auditor.

Supt. Sancho Bernales, Bohol police provincial director, said the suspects gained entrance by cutting the iron grill at the rear portion of the bank's building. Once inside, the burglars tore open the bank's vault doors using an acetylene torch. *Chito Fuentes, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Thieves ransack office of Davao City councilor

DAVAO CITY—The city might be heavily secured with the deployment of more soldiers and police personnel, but this did not deter robbers from striking at the heart of the city government.

On Monday, Councilor Danilo Dayanghirang reported that his office was ransacked by still unidentified suspects.

Dayanghirang said the suspects took his "legislative records" but did not take computers inside his office, which is in the Sanggunlang Panlungsod Building, near City Hall.

"It's good they did not bother to take the computers," he said.

Dayanghirang said the suspects could have immediately left after taking the files.

He said he wanted the police to determine why the suspects appeared to be so interested in his legislative records.

Police said the break-in might have occurred Sunday evening or even earlier than that.

It was the fourth incident of robbery this year inside the SP Building.

A few months ago, the offices of councilors Peter Lavina, Jimmy Dureza and former councilor Teresita Maranon were also burglarized.

The suspects, during the separate incidents, stole computer parts and other valuable items.

"I am going to write Vice Mayor Luis Bonguyan on how to improve the security system of the building," Dayanghirang said. *Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

22 Visayas villages get ₱6.6M from peace pact with former NPAs

By Romy G. Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—Some 22 barangays in four provinces in the Visayas have received P6.6 million in livelihood assistance from the government as part of the development projects mandated by the peace agreement between the government and breakaway rebels.

The money, which was released in three tranches beginning last March, came from the President's Social Fund, coursed through the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), which is tasked with planning and implementing the development projects under the peace agreement.

The recipient barangays were located in the towns of Sta. Catalina, Negros Oriental; Candoni, Cauayan, Don Salvador Benedicto in Negros Occidental; Leon and San Joaquin in Iloilo and Ibajay in Aklan.

The beneficiary barangays received P300,000 each. It was channeled through the Reform and Peace Movement of the Philippines Foundation (RPMPF), a conduit organization of the Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa/Revolutionary Proletarian Army/Alex Boncayao Brigade appointed by the Joint Enforcement and Monitoring Committee (JEMC) to implement the livelihood component of the Dec. 6, 2000 peace agreement.

JEMC is composed of two representatives each from the government and the rebels and one from the private sector chosen by both parties.

Veronica Tabara, RPMPF executive director, said the livelihood projects were carried out only in villages where rebels are present. Under the peace agreement, there are 141 such barangays all over the country, mainly in the Visayas.

Tabara, however, said while the livelihood component was now gradually being put in place, it was just a small part of the over-all development program provided by the peace agreement.

Tabara, the widow of Arturo Tabara, rebel head who was gunned down in Quezon City in September, said the JEMC agreed that the implementation of the peace process was "slow, uncoordinated and sometimes inconsistent."

"Nothing has been delivered in terms of infrastructure, and social services which will compose the bulk of the development projects," Tabara said.

The committee, however, said there were already major development projects due for implementation starting next year. It said some P29 million, from where the P6.6 million livelihood assistance was taken, had already been set aside for these projects.

GenSan flood victims to receive free houses

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The construction of a low-cost housing project for displaced flood victims has started at the five-hectare relocation site at the suburb of this city.

Mayor Pedro Acharon Jr. told reporters that 60 housing units had already been completed during the six-day "Christmas Build."

The city government provided the funds in acquiring the lot in Mabuhay Village, some 14 km from the heart of the city.

Acharon said as soon as the construction is completed, the city government would award an initial 89 housing units to beneficiaries.

The mayor personally led the volunteer workers in building the houses.

Those who joined in the "bayanihan" construction included city employees, representatives from the academe, civic and religious organizations, non-government organizations and people's organizations.

In April, the groundbreaking rites, blessing and the laying of a time capsule was held in the presence of the mayor, village officials, prospective beneficiaries, regional Gawad Kalinga coordinator Rene Rieta and government employees.

The beneficiaries were mostly flood victims formerly residing in Calumpang and Labangal villages here. They lost all their belongings when floods swept their homes last year. *Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

PHOTO FROM PNRC

HELP
Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, shows to Spanish Ambassador Ignacio Sagaz the relief goods that the Red Cross is distributing to typhoon victims. The Spanish ambassador had pledged to donate P21 million for the relief effort.

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NPA says gov't ceasefire a sham

By Delfin Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—Communist spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Rogér" Rosal scored the government's unilateral ceasefire and called it a "duplicitous publicity gimmick."

Rosal quoted reports that forces of the 17th Infantry Battalion had been carrying out offensive military operations in Baggao, Cagayan since Monday.

He also said soldiers belonging to the 5th Scout Rangers Regiment had been "penetrating guerrilla zones," resulting in an armed encounter last Dec. 16.

He added that since Monday, soldiers of the 16th Infantry Battalion were carrying out offensive operations in Sta. Cruz, Mindoro Occidental.

"These operations betray the Arroyo administration's doublespeak with regard to its declaration of a unilateral ceasefire," Rosal said in a statement released by the Party Information Bureau.

He said they were still verifying reports of continuing military operations in other regions.

"Such AFP offensives make it impossible anyway for the people to peacefully observe Christmas and the New Year. It betrays the Arroyo administration's complete disregard for the people's traditions," he said.

Malaysian diplomat visits Cotabato fest with no bodyguards

COTABATO CITY—Malaysian consul general Ibrahim Ismael caught city officials by surprise when he and his wife came here from Davao City via public transport to grace the culmination of the Shariff Kabunsuan festival Saturday.

Mayor Muslimin Sema said Consul General Ismael and his wife traveled to Cotabato City via a Weena Bus arriving at the hotel unarmed and with no police or military escorts.

"They came over quietly unmindful of their security along the way," Sema said during the fluvial parade along Rio Grande de Mindanao to commemorate the arrival of Shariff Kabunsuan several centuries ago to spread Islam in mainland Mindanao.

The Malaysian diplomat later urged all Muslims in the country to work for peace since Islam is peace.

"Let this place and country be a peaceful one so that all of you, regardless of religion and color, will benefit from it," he told guests and visitors of the annual festival held at the city wharf.

Bai Sandra Sema, wife of Mayor Sema and chair of the weeklong festival, said that what Consul Ismael did was an indication "our place is safe even to foreigners."

"He came minus Mercedez Benzes, minus military and police escorts, minus a security (escort) that a diplomat should have in visiting places of assignment," the mayor said.

"I was told that he was convinced the city is safe so he came without much fanfare and without welcoming streamers," Sema later told the INQUIRER.

The diplomat should have taken a 5 a.m. bus trip from Davao City in time for the 9 a.m. program.

But Ismael, Sema said, opted to take the late afternoon trip Friday and arrived in Cotabato City at past 6 p.m. *Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

No cuts made on Tacloban budget

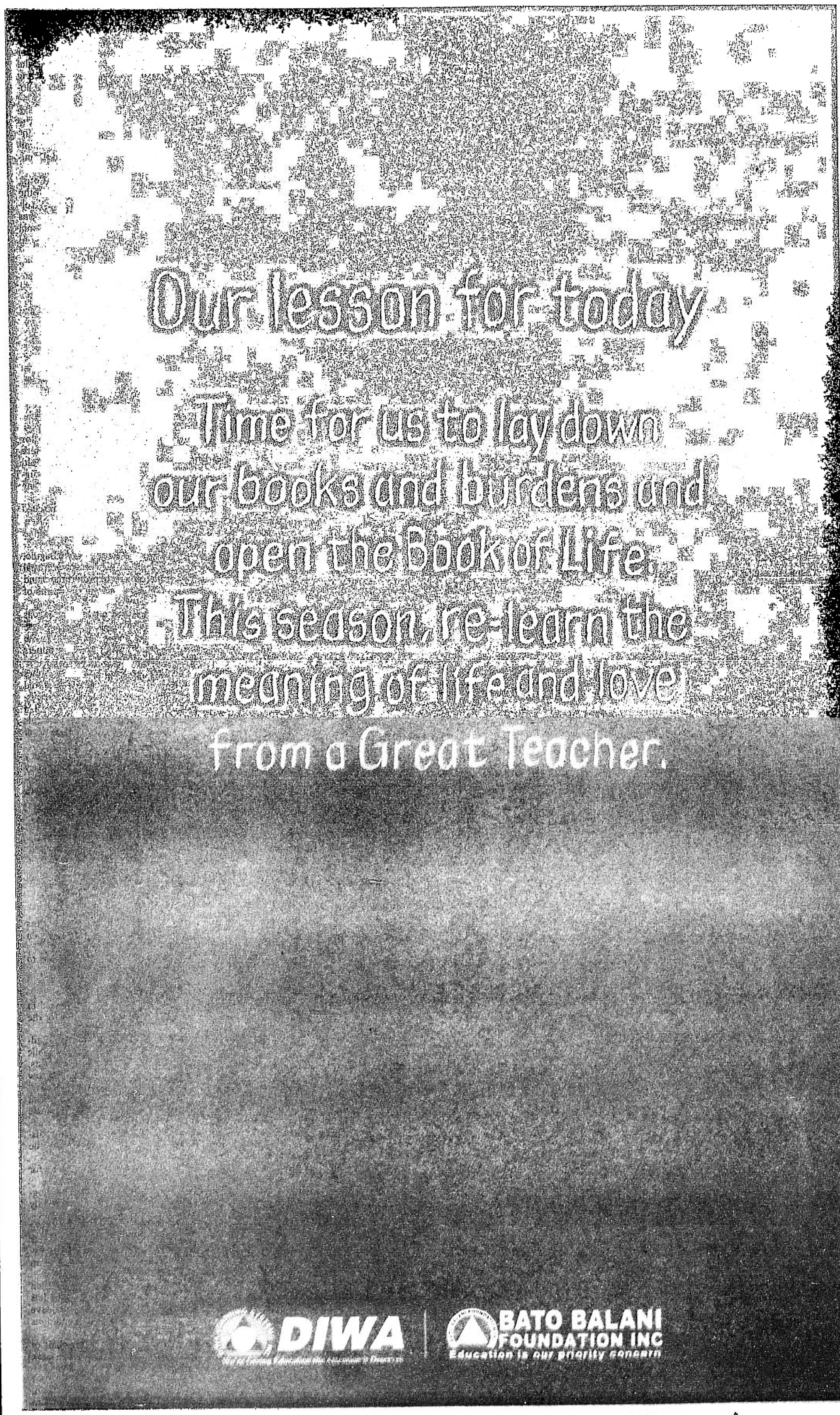
TACLOBAN CITY—The Tacloban City Council on Wednesday unanimously approved without change the P446.967 million 2005 budget submitted by Mayor Alfredo 'Bejo' Romualdez Sr.

Councilor Wilson Uy, chair of the council's committee on finance, said the 2005 budget is higher by 5 percent when compared to this year's P435 million budget but they decided to approve it without any revision because it was "within the capacity and needs of the city government."

In the 2005 budget, maintenance and operating and other expenses got the lion's share of the amount of P164.47 million, followed by personnel services at P157.93 million.

The rest of the budget was allocated for capital outlay at P56.23 million and items classified as other requirements at P69.32 million.

The city's Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) share local taxes and other revenue-generating efforts were the main sources of the city's 2005 budget. *Joey Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau*


Our lesson for today
Time for us to lay down our books and burdens and open the Book of Life. This season, re-learn the meaning of life and love
from a Great Teacher.
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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

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Brothers in arms, shovels dig for hope

By Frank Cimatu
Baguio City

THEY can now afford to joke about "Luis the Dreamer" and his "Puso ng Negro," and "K8 and His Extraordinary Nose" but two weeks ago, a group of Benguet miners was anxious men on a life-and-death mission.

On Dec. 4, Reynaldo Flores, an engineer, was on his way to Baguio City from his work at the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. in Mankayan, Benguet, when he got a call from the LCMC main office asking him to lead a rescue team in Real, Quezon.

The Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association had hastily formed a crack team of miners to help in the search-and-rescue mission in Real, following the killer landslides that swamped the town.

"All I could [ask] was who were the members of my team. When I got their names, I was satisfied that I have a good team," Flores said.

In Baguio, his 10-member team was met by the 13-member team of Philex Mining Corp. led by Joel Son, also an engineer. The next day, the group was met and briefed by Army personnel in Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal, before they proceeded to Real. The 20-member team from Benguet Corp. in Benguet and Zambales arrived a day later.

All these miners had were oxygen acetylene torches, sledgehammers, pinch and crowbars, chisels, digging bars, spades and tons of courage.

Up to the task

What they saw in Real that Sunday was horrible but they were up to the task. Flores had been in the mining industry for the past 26 years while Son had been in the industry for the past 29 years. Most of these years were spent on mine safety.

"I'm used to this. This is our normal commitment," Son said. "In fact, the men were on high morale despite living on sardines."

Until they came to what was left of the Repador building near the shores of Barangay Tignoan in Real at past 2 p.m. on Dec. 6. It was about a 4-km walk from their base and with their equipment in tow, they decided to go still with gin and high spirits.

Residents told them that the building was a sanctuary during storms. Its roof had been blown off and the miners had started prying the concrete ceiling.

"The military lacked equipment and wanted to blast the ceiling off as well but the miners all said, 'We can do it,'" Flores said.

On the night of Dec. 8, 49-year-old Luis Balungay of Philex was urinating near the site when he heard a woman crying. He called his team and wanted to dig through the ceiling but it was already late in the evening.

Nightmare

Later that night, Balungay had his now famous dream, which was in the lead paragraph of an INQUIRER banner story about the rescue. It was a classic *bangungot* (nightmare), where Balungay felt helpless throughout.

The story described his dream as a child who crept from his foot to his leg and who suddenly became an elderly woman.

But 10 days later and now a little inebriated at the Mines and Geosciences Bureau in Baguio City, Balungay said the child actually grabbed his crotch and then became an elderly woman.

"She grabbed it hard. And from then on, I could not sleep," Balungay said. Thus was born the legend of "Luis the Dreamer," the description now given by his fellow miners.

Balungay was also chided when they hit on a *pozo negro* (septic tank) of the building and Balungay repeated it as "Puso ng Negro (heart of a black person)."

"*Bukas, mahahanapan natin ang puso ng Pilipino* (We will find the heart of the Filipino tomorrow)," the Kalinga native said. "And I was proven right," he added.

On the early morning of Dec. 9, the team led by Son, Flores and Vincent Bactadan and Jimmy Ignasaben of Benguet Corp. mapped out their strategy.

'Luis the Dreamer'

At about 7:30 a.m., Balungay's teammate, Felix Limmayog, heard probably what "Luis the Dreamer" heard the night before.

MINERS (from top left, clockwise) Luis Balungay, Juan Napudo, Emilio Manibog and Dominador Sotelo played heroes to victims of landslides in Real, Quezon and of the 1990 earthquake in Baguio. EV ESPIRITU

The team then went on the move and by about 10 a.m. they were able to rescue three-year-old old Estela Marie Sur and her grandmother Maria Tamares, 14-year-old Ian Bungag and 15-year-old Modesto Manuguid. They also found 30 other bodies inside the building but the joy of finding survivors brought back hope to the miners.

To Balungay and three other miners in that team, it was the July 1990 earthquake all over again. During that killer quake, the miners also played heroes, finding survivors when the foreign rescue workers with their sophisticated equipment and canine could not find one.

It was apt that the story of Pedrito Dy, who survived for 15 days at the collapsed Hyatt Terraces then, was also featured in the INQUIRER together with the Repador survivors because Balungay was among the Philex miners who pulled Dy out of the rubble.

Haunting moment

Balungay recalled not having a dream when they rescued Dy but remembered a haunting moment that still gives him the creeps.

"One night there was an aftershock and suddenly we heard a chorus of cries and moans and then silence. Then an old miner among us said that these were the voices of the dead trapped among the rubble," Balungay said in Ilocano.

The other 1990 earthquake heroes who were also in the team that pulled out the survivors in Real were Emilio Manibog, Juan Napudo and Dominador Sotelo.

Manibog, of Benguet Corp., was among those assigned at the rescue operations at the collapsed Hotel Nevada. He was among those who saved Sonia Roco, wife of former Sen. Raul Roco.

"When I heard about the problem in Quezon, I immediately volunteered because I wanted to help those in need," said Manibog, a miner since 1975.

Backhoe pointer

Manibog was called "K8" because of his strong sense of smell, and could differentiate between a dead person and other carcasses.

In Real, his job was to be the "pointer" of a backhoe.

"I would tell the operator when to stop because there was a body and rescuers would have to be more careful in digging out the body," Manibog said.

By the time the miners rescued the four survivors in Repador, heavy equipment like backhoes finally arrived in Real.

When they returned to Baguio, the miners performed a ritual called *daw-es* to protect them and their families from the spirits of the dead.

A pair of native chickens was beaten to death and a dog was slaughtered so the spirits of the dead would not follow the miners to their homes.

On Monday, the regional Mines and Geosciences Bureau honored the miners during their flag raising ceremony and sponsored a party for them. MGB officials gave the miners certificates of valor.

"We cannot offer them money, but the valor and heroism they showed cannot be bought," Neoman dela Cruz, MGB Cordillera director, said.

Sampaguita gets a new meaning

By Anselmo Roque
Science City of Muñoz

SAMPAGUITA, the country's national flower, is being given another face. And carving the new face, which is calculated to touch the lives of the poor, is the Congressional Spouses Foundation Inc. (CSFI), in cooperation with the Department of Social Welfare and Development and other government and private organizations.

"Its white color symbolizes hope while its star-shaped flowers symbolize a dream. It is a hope for the realization of dreams," Gina de Venecia, CSFI president, told a press briefing recently.

At present, the CSFI is helping the so-called "sampaguita girls" or those seen hawking sampaguita garlands and leis in most Metro Manila streets, De Venecia said.

But as an expansion of the project, the CSFI is finalizing plans to maximize the benefits that sampaguita can offer to more people, she said.

"During these [difficult] times, the sampaguita can be looked up to as an inspiring symbol. It will be the 'dream star' not only of the sampaguita girls of Metro Manila but also of the countless number of our countrymen who may be involved in a lucrative income-generating project," she said.

De Venecia was guest during the week-long celebration of the 4th charter anniversary of the Science City of Muñoz.

In the Metro Manila project, De Venecia said, the parents of the sampaguita girls are being helped by the CSFI to wean them from selling their wares on the streets.

With the help of Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman and Environment Secretary Michael Defensor, the CSFI has secured a one-hectare land in Quezon City where parents of the sampaguita girls will grow sampaguita flowers and produce sampaguita garlands and leis.

The parents will be assisted in the marketing of their produce. Part of the income will fund the scholarships of their daughters.

For the expansion of the project, there is a need to select a sampaguita variety that is better than the other varieties grown in many parts in the country, De Venecia said.

"In Bangkok, I have seen sampaguita flowers whose shelf life is almost a week. And they are bigger," she said.

Another variety will have a scent that can be used for sampaguita perfume. "This certainly will be a big industry that will involve many poor people," she said.

Mayor Nestor Alvarez, a former dean and research scientist of the Central Luzon State University in Muñoz, offered to involve other scientists in the project.

The CSFI's other project, the "Haven for Women," gives refuge to unwed mothers. It has established centers in several regions, aside from 15 buildings in Muntinlupa City.

Long term economic difficulties seen for residents of Dingalan

By Tonette Orejas
Dingalan, Aurora

ON DEC. 7, brothers Bobby and Arbe Augia plowed their borrowed shovels deep into the hardened mud and scooped out a metal bed they hoped to sell to a junk shop to have money for the family's lunch that day.

In Barangay Paltic in Dingalan, Aurora, the village hardest hit by the landslides, men bore on their shoulders pieces of newly cut timber to sell.

At the coast of Paltic, in Sitio Kamagong, the boat of 77-year-old fisherman Isidro Dayap was anchored, idled as he spent the day removing the mud that swamped his house.

At the town proper, long queues of residents from the town's 11 villages waited for relief goods. That morning, Pampanga Board Member Lilia Pineda brought 4,500 relief packs for the 22,000 residents in the town.

At a furniture store behind the municipal hall, there were no takers for carved wooden chairs, tables and doors.

Even those with regular salaries found themselves in dire straits. Edgardo Mangahas, the town's statistician, was applying for a loan from the Government Service Insurance System.

Scenes of desperation

These scenes of desperation to earn, of living on the generosity of others, and of rebuilding lives amid scant resources may well be the signs of a far worse disaster than landslides and flash floods.

"They're sure to experience economic dislocation," said Ricardo Calderon, Central Luzon forestry chief, on what awaits this town that was opened to logging activities in the 1930s.

He said the landslides that destroyed the forests in this part of the Sierra Madre mountain ranges make logging and the production of furniture and charcoal not viable enterprises anymore.

Fishing is neither a reliable year-round source of income.

Farmers have not resumed planting, not even food crops, said Felipe Serna, chair of the Pinagkaisang Samahan ng Magbubukid ng Dingalan. The mountain plots have loose soil, he said.

Calderon said the town's economic recovery would be set back by recurring landslides in the next five to 10 years because of two big eroded hills and five small patches on Mt. Mingan.

The scarcity of wood, he said, would not be immediately felt.

The trees that the rains washed down could fill up 21,000 10-wheel trucks, initial inventory by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources showed.

Crisis situation

Calderon said the damage to infrastructure in the town, estimated at P120 million, could slow down the rebuilding process and contribute to a crisis situation.

Ramon Aquino, regional director of the Department of Public Works and Highways, said the re-gravelling works for the lone route to Dingalan—via Laur and Gabaldon towns in Nueva Ecija—would cost between P30 and P40 million.

Calderon said more threats to the environment could occur and the effects of the disasters magnified twice over if the residents opened new logging frontiers to tide themselves over, especially when help stops coming.

"Immediate areas are vulnerable to exploitation," Calderon said.

Vigilance

But he said the disaster harnessed in the residents a sense of vigilance for the environment.

The DENR, he said, hopes to "take advantage of that and use that for public participation in protecting the forests," which is a matter of life and death now for them."

He said the municipal government should immediately review its land use plan.

The debris that the landslides had disgorged could be used to overcome the disaster.

Boulders that buried Paltic are best for construction materials, Calderon said.

But the trees have gone into the loggers' hands more than to residents badly needing lumber to build new houses.

Mayor Jaime Ylarde turned timid when asked how small-scale loggers would cope in the next months. However, he said, the rebuilding of Dingalan would need a lot of help.

Already, the looting of homes has been rampant, said Aurelia Marilao. She has guarded her house, refusing to leave Paltic for the uncomfortable conditions at the evacuation centers.

Ed Pujeda, former barangay chair of Paltic, said rehabilitation, although slow, was still possible at least in his village.

"We have a high sense of hope. Our home has been Dingalan," he said. "[But] I hope public funds would go to farming and fishing families here."

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PCSO TODAY

How to make the most of your Lotto bet card

by Ferdinand G. Mendoza

Is choosing six numbers confusing for you?

Let's say you were thinking of using the birthdates of your family members in selecting the final number combination in your lotto bet card. But it so happens you are only five in the family? Where do you get the sixth number?

Dig this, you don't need a sixth number. There's a game in lotto that allows you to bet and win, using five numbers.

Michael Torres, 27, a father of two has been playing lotto for five years. He has been consistently betting on a number combination which he conceived from the birthdates of his love ones. Apparently, he had to consider birthdates of his maid and a very distant relative just to complete the required six numbers. Little did he know that his birth date, along with the dates of birth of his wife, two kids and mother-in-law are adequate to play the lotto Six-Digit Game.

"But that's only five? Can I bet five numbers on a six-digit game," asked Torres.

"Yes. We have a game called the 5R, which allows a player to play and win in lotto, using just five numbers," said Eufracio Fufugal of the Central Operations Department of PCSO.

Fufugal explained that the 5R game is part of the lotto's System Play scheme.

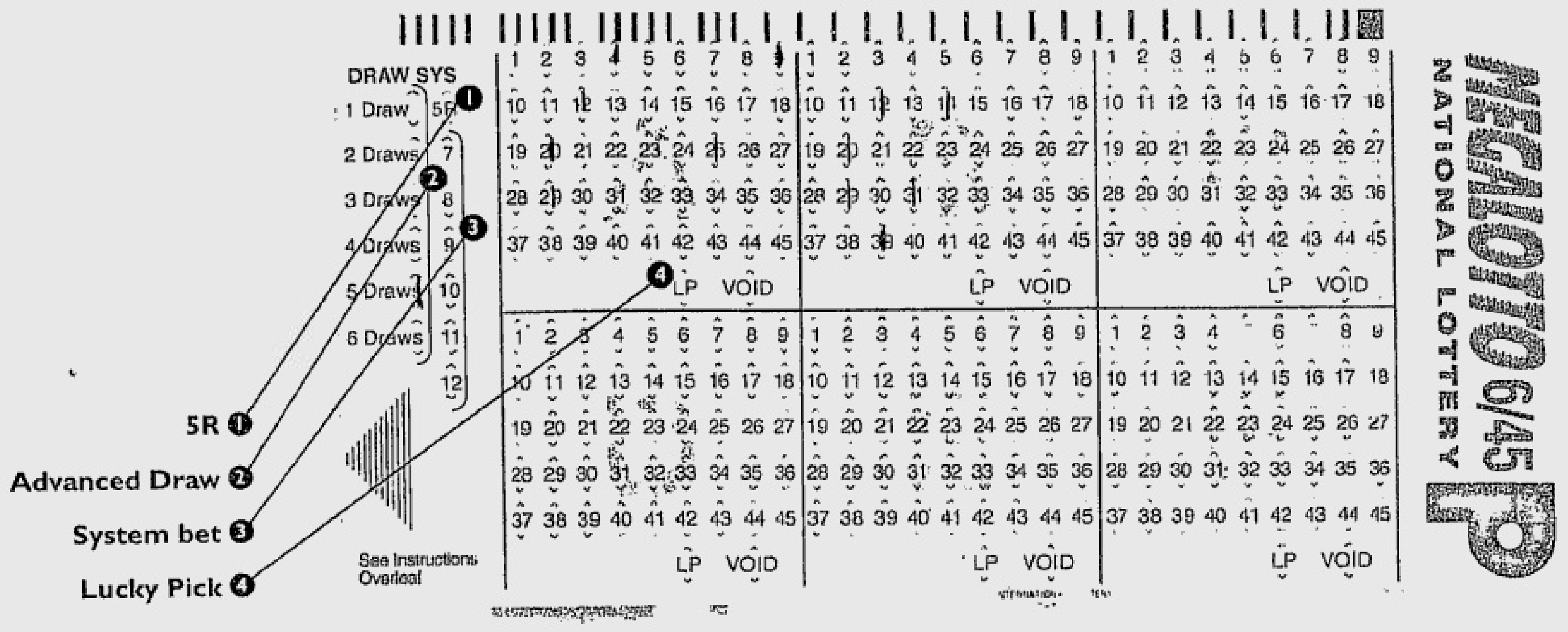
Says Fufugal: "If you pick only five numbers and you want to play, say lotto 6/42, the computer registers your five numbers, and then matches your five numbers with the remaining thirty-seven (37) numbers that you did not choose from 1 to 42. This will give you thirty-seven 6-number combinations. Bale, parang joker iyong pang-anim na numero," Fufugal disclosed.

A 5-number lotto game is called the 5R. It costs P370 for the 6/42 game, P400 for the 6/45 game and P440 for the 6/49 game.

Fufugal further added that when a 5R player hits the jackpot, he or she takes home an additional P720,000.00, on top of his jackpot prize.

"That's because the 5R player also hit 36 combinations of 5 digits worth P20,000 each," said Fufugal.

"The six-digit game is exciting to play. However, There are several options if one is bored with the standard or regular lotto 7 to 12 play," remarked Fufugal.



Advance Draw

Nenita Tamayo, a mother of four has been playing lotto for the last two years. She walks two kilometers from her house located at the center of a large subdivision in Quezon City to reach the lotto outlet just in front of the subdivision's main gate. "I have to cross an eight lane highway just to bet on my dreams," said Tamayo. What Tamayo does not know, is that she can lessen the frequency of the long walk to the lotto outlet by playing what is called the Lotto Advance Draw.

"If you don't want to go to the lotto outlet daily, you may play Advance Draw. Just mark the number of draws you want to play under 'DRAW' and your ticket is valid for the current draw and the succeeding draws depending on how many draws you mark" stressed Fufugal.

System Draw

There is also the System Draw, a lotto game involving more than six numbers. If a lotto player has seven numbers in mind and doesn't know which number to drop, the lotto player can play System 7 (printed 'SYS7' on the card). The computer will give the lotto player all the possible six-number combinations from the player's seven numbers. With System 7, the player will have seven (7) six-number combinations. The same principle applies to Systems 8 to 12," Fufugal likewise volunteered that an enthusiastic lotto player can even bet on all the numbers!

Added Fufugal: In the case of 6/42, there are about 5.8 Million six-number combinations. And almost 8 million and 13 million six-number combinations for 6/45 and 6/49, respectively.

"Well, if you are that rich and ready to gamble your P58M savings, or 80 million, or 130 million, you are one-hundred per cent sure to hit the jackpot," exclaimed Fufugal.

Lucky Pick

Now, for those who find it a drag to always think up lucky numbers when playing lotto, they can opt for the Lucky Pick. In this type of play, it is the computer that selects the six-number combination. All the lotto player has to do is mark the Lucky Pick ('LP' on the card) and the computer will choose six numbers for him or her.

A player can also experiment by combining the Lucky pick with other Lotto formats. For example, the player can mark 5R and LP on his/her play slip and the computer will play a combination of 5R and Lucky Pick play. The same also applies to System bet: Mark LP and System Play of your choice, say SYS7, and the computer will choose seven numbers.

So, ready to bet? This may just be your lucky day!

Official Draw Results

Lotto 6/42 Dec. 2004 **07**
in any order
3 9 12 23 26 34
1 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 9,771,314.70
All following numbers should be in exact order
Lotto 6 Digit: 7 5 3 8 7 1
1 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 1,523,733.58
Suertres: 3 0 0
Lotto EZ 2: 27 06

MegaLotto 6/45 Dec. 2004 **08**
in any order
7 11 21 31 41 44
2 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 15,089,896.50
All following numbers should be in exact order
Lotto 4 Digit: 5 8 4 2
Suertres: 2 0 5
Lotto EZ 2: 21 13

SuperLotto 6/49 Dec. 2004 **09**
in any order
2 18 24 28 47 49
1 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 26,756,404.50
All following numbers should be in exact order
Lotto 6 Digit: 3 2 2 7 7 6
0 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 1,870,504.4
Suertres: 2 0 7
Lotto EZ 2: 22 08

MegaLotto 6/45 Dec. 2004 **10**
in any order
3 7 15 16 31 36
0 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 5,011,053.60
All following numbers should be in exact order
Lotto 4 Digit: 0 1 1 3
Suertres: 6 6 9
Lotto EZ 2: 03 31

Lotto 6/42 Dec. 2004 **11**
in any order
1 22 23 30 31 34
0 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 4,418,085.00
All following numbers should be in exact order
Lotto 6 Digit: 7 5 5 7 4 4
0 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 2,420,624.18
Suertres: 8 6 5
Lotto EZ 2: 11 03

SuperLotto 6/49 Dec. 2004 **12**
in any order
1 8 14 15 42 43
0 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 8,000,000.00
All following numbers should be in exact order
Suertres: 8 1 0
Lotto EZ 2: 14 07

MegaLotto 6/45 Dec. 2004 **13**
in any order
6 8 21 31 38 44
0 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 10,156,293.00
All following numbers should be in exact order
Lotto 4 Digit: 9 2 0 7
Suertres: 3 2 6
Lotto EZ 2: 05 24

Lotto 6/42 Dec. 2004 **14**
in any order
1 2 3 4 14 20
3 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 9,243,349.50
All following numbers should be in exact order
Lotto 6 Digit: 6 7 0 6 2 0
0 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 2,899,160.68
Suertres: 3 7 5
Lotto EZ 2: 01 05

MegaLotto 6/45 Dec. 2004 **15**
in any order
1 19 22 25 35 41
0 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 15,730,362.90
All following numbers should be in exact order
Lotto 4 Digit: 9 8 3 3
Suertres: 5 6 3
Lotto EZ 2: 24 19

SuperLotto 6/49 Dec. 2004 **16**
in any order
6 19 31 32 39 48
0 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 11,012,280.30
All following numbers should be in exact order
Lotto 6 Digit: 0 7 6 0 3 4
1 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 3,465,978.00
Suertres: 4 5 3
Lotto EZ 2: 28 15

MegaLotto 6/45 Dec. 2004 **17**
in any order
4 6 11 15 29 41
0 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 21,374,965.50
All following numbers should be in exact order
Lotto 4 Digit: 7 4 6 9
Suertres: 0 5 2
Lotto EZ 2: 01 02

Lotto 6/42 Dec. 2004 **18**
in any order
7 14 18 29 34 41
0 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 4,568,871.30
All following numbers should be in exact order
Lotto 6 Digit: 3 4 8 3 3 9
0 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 150,000.00
Suertres: 0 3 0
Lotto EZ 2: 12 08

SuperLotto 6/49 Dec. 2004 **19**
in any order
46 19 22 39 17 07
0 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 16,440,4356.90
All following numbers should be in exact order
Suertres: 6 8 1
Lotto EZ 2: 28 03

MegaLotto 6/45 Dec. 2004 **20**
in any order
24 41 23 25 45 12
0 Jackpot Prize Winner/s of Php 27,220,533.90
All following numbers should be in exact order
Lotto 4 Digit: 2 5 5 0
Suertres: 5 9 9
Lotto EZ 2: 29 08

Steps in Opening a Lotto Outlet

(As supplied by the PCSO Central Operations Department)

1. Comply with the following requirements prior to requesting for an on-line lottery application form:

(1) Individual applicant must be a Filipino citizen and at least 21 years old.
(2) Corporate/Partnership applicants must be registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).
(3) The SEC-registered corporate/partnership applicants must have the operation of a lotto outlet as their primary and/or secondary purpose.
(4) Person/s representing Corporate/Partnership applicants must be duly authorized, as evidenced by a Secretary Certificate and/or Board Resolution (for Corporation), and Special Power of Attorney (for Partnership)

2. Acquire and fill-up on-line lottery application form

3. Submit the following:

(1) Three (3) latest ID pictures (2x2)
(2) Three (3) latest ID pictures (2x2) of spouse
(3) Letter of Intent
(4) Filled-up On-Line Lottery Application Form
(5) Proof of income i.e. income tax return (ITR), registration of business, audited financial statements, certificate of income
(6) Proof of ownership or lease of outlet (for owner – land title or TCT; for lessee – notarized contract of lease, building owner's authorization (Form L005)
(7) NBI Clearance (current)
(8) Barangay Clearance (personal record)
(9) Photograph of Building (where lotto outlet will be placed)
(10) Photograph of Interior of building (where lotto outlet will be placed)

4. REQUIREMENTS FOR CORPORATIONS

(1) Biodata of corporate officers and directors
(2) Photocopy of S.E.C. Registration
(3) Photocopy of Articles of Incorporation
(4) Photocopy of By Laws
(5) Secretary Certificate and/or Board Resolution duly authorizing person/s to transact with PCSO for purposes of the operation of lotto
(6) Latest Audited Financial Statement
(7) Income Tax Return (ITR) for the preceding year
(8) Letter of Intent
(9) Contract of lease
(10) Building owners authorization
(11) Photograph of building
(12) Photograph of interior

5. REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTNERSHIPS

(1) Biodata of partners
(2) Photocopy of S.E.C. registration
(3) Photocopy of by-laws
(4) Special Power of Attorney (S.P.A.) duly authorizing person/s to transact with PCSO for purposes of the operation of lotto
(5) Latest Audited Financial Statement
(6) Income Tax Return (ITR) for the preceding year
(7) Letter of Intent
(8) Contract of lease
(9) Building owners authorization
(10) Photograph of building
(11) Photograph of interior

All application forms should be properly filled-up and should include all the required documents. Applications with incomplete requirements will not be processed.

6. CRITERIA FOR LOTTO OUTLETS

(1) 100 meters away from an existing lotto outlet, schools/place of learning and places of worship except if the location is enclosed or a shopping center, subject to PCSO's policies and existing rules
a. National Capital Region – 100 meters
b. Southern Tagalog & Bicol Region – 200-250 meters
c. Northern and Central Luzon – 200-250 meters
(2) Good human traffic, i.e. situated in commercial or busy intersections/areas. The location of terminal/booth should be strategic if within a mall or superstore.
(3) In cases of malls, In cases of malls, shopping centers or superstores, the lottery location need not be enclosed provided there is security of operation, esp. after store hours. Enclosed (for security purposes) but with frontage for human traffic/entry. Frontage must face main road or to the direction of major traffic flow.
(4) Flood-free and properly ventilated.
(5) Floor space of 8-9 sq. meters or available business counter measuring at least 2.0 X 1.0m.
(6) Preferably with at least one (1) telephone facility, landline or cellular, for hotline operations. Such telephone (esp. landline) should be situated at no more than one (1) meter from the proposed terminal location.
(7) With regular power supply of 220 VAC, with grounding and available power point/s.
(8) With available shelf/counter/cabinet for terminal installation, modem and storage of lottery materials.
(9) With operators to be made available for training in the operation of the terminals preferably one dedicated personnel and a back-up personnel per terminal. This agent will be advised on when the operators will be trained.
(10) Major operating hours fall within 7:00 AM – 8:30PM, seven (7) days a week.
(11) Approved technical site survey by carrier.

All application forms should be properly filled-up and should include all the required documents. Applications with incomplete requirements will not be processed.

Sweepstakes Daily Draw Mechanics

By Carlos Catillo, Sales Manager, PCSO

BUYING AND SELLING OF TICKETS

1. Tickets are ready to be sold one month before the start of the actual draw. Sales will continue while supply lasts.

2. Tickets can be bought from private ticket agents, vendors or outlets, at the PCSO Central Office, E. Rodriguez Ave, Quezon City, and at PCSO District Offices nationwide.

3. You can only buy tickets by the booklet at the PCSO. One booklet consists of 10 whole tickets, each having 5 single tickets. One booklet has 50 single tickets.

4. A booklet purchased directly from PCSO offices enjoys a 28% discount, costing only P360 per booklet. Retail price is P500 per booklet or P10 per single ticket. A ticket vendor or agent can thus earn P140.00 per booklet if he buys directly from PCSO and sells it to individual buyers.

5. Ticket counters at PCSO offices open at 8 a.m. and close at 2 p.m. daily. Selling of tickets by agents and vendors outside PCSO can go on for 24 hours since tickets are eligible to play daily, even if they have already won.

DRAW MECHANICS AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS

6. The SWEEPSTAKES DRAW shall be held at the PCSO draw court everyday at 4 p.m. It shall be witnessed by an independent judge and other PCSO officials and Commission on Audit (COA) representatives.

7. The daily draws will be broadcast over NBN Channel 4 during the 9 p.m. LOTTO draws.

8. The SWEEPSTAKES DRAW results shall be published together with the LOTTO DRAW results the following morning in all leading newspapers and be broadcast in different radio stations.

PRIZE MECHANICS:

9. As with the old sweepstakes, each whole ticket has 5 single shares with identical numbers. Each single ticket, however, has an assigned letter, which is any of the following: P,C,S,O,L. Thus a single ticket has a number and letter combination.

10. The jackpot prize goes to a single ticket or share that bears the lucky number-letter combination drawn. All the other tickets that share the same number but have the other letters shall be given the consolation prizes.

11. The jackpot prize for the winning number-letter combination is P100,000. The consolation prize for the four remaining tickets with the same number as the jackpot prize but bearing different letters is P25,000.00 each. If one person buys the whole winning ticket consisting of 5 single tickets with identical numbers, then he wins a total of P200,000.00 for the day.

12. Each ticket is eligible to play daily for the entire month and win the jackpot or consolation prizes many times over. A multiple winner shall be issued a certificate in lieu of the ticket to claim the prize anew.

13. If the winning number for the day is still unsold by PCSO, then the unwon prizes for the day will be added to the prize for the last draw date of the month.

14. On the last draw date, all the unwon prizes plus the day's jackpot and consolation prizes shall form the total prize pot. In case the drawn number is still unsold, another will be drawn until such time that a drawn ticket is won.

7 Points to Remember on the New Sweepstakes Daily Draw

SWEEPTAKES DAILY DRAW
P100,000
P100,000
P6.5 Million

by Robert Bastillo

1. The new Sweepstakes Daily Draw (SDD) ticket costs only P10. Each bought ticket will be included in a daily draw that will run from Dec. 1 to Dec. 31. This means, if a ticket is bought before Dec. 1, it has a month-long chance of winning the daily grand prize of P100,000.

2. Those who buy their tickets before Dec.1 will have greater chances of winning. For example: A ticket bought on or before Dec.1 (start of draw) will have 31 chances of winning, while a ticket bought on Dec. 2 will only have 30 chances of winning.

3. Each bought ticket has multiple chances of winning. As more tickets are bought, the chances increase even more.

4. If the winning ticket for the day is unsold, the jackpot prize for the unsold ticket will be added to the prize for the last day of the month (Dec. 31).

5. Draws will be held every 4 p.m at the PCSO Draw Court, PCSO Main Building, E. Rodriguez Avenue, Quezon City.

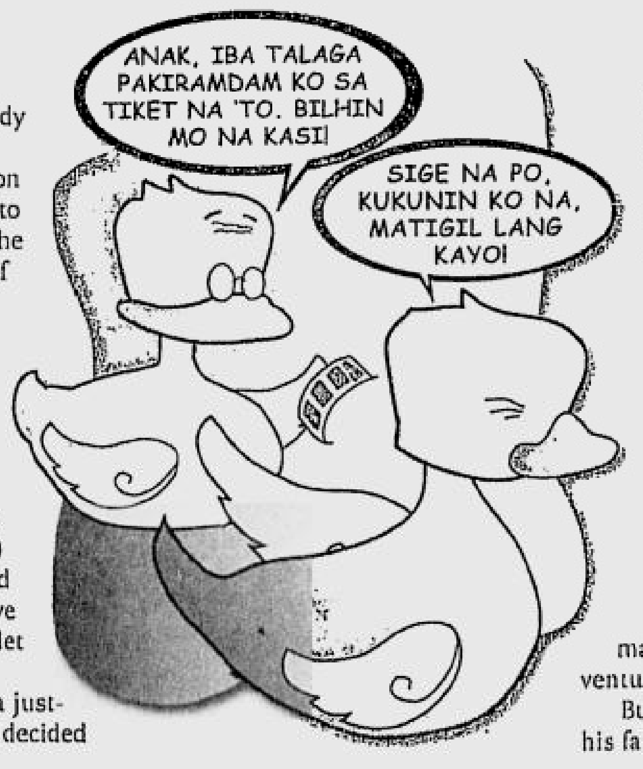
6. All draws will also be telecast live daily. Airing time: 9 pm at NBN 4 during the daily lotto draws.

7. Tickets are sold through the PCSO Provincial District Offices, Sales Distributors, and Sales Agents or Vendors.

'Daddy knows best'

Winning the sweepstakes through gentle persuasion

by Ferdinand G. Mendoza


ANAK, IBA TALAGA PAKIRAMDAM KO SA TIKET NA 'TO. BILHIN MO NA KASI!
SIGE NA PO, KUKUNIN KO NA, MATIGIL LANG KAYO!

IN THIS particular case, Daddy knows best.

A father's gentle persuasion brought sudden good fortune to his eldest son, who bagged the jackpot prize in the first draw of the "Isang sweepstakes tiket, Isang buwang araw-araw papremyo" promo of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) last December 1.

"I was practically forced by my father to buy the new Sweepstakes Daily Draw (SDD) tickets he was selling," gushed the lucky car sales representative who purchased an entire booklet after a little cajoling.

He added that his father, a just-returned overseas worker, had decided to make a career of selling SDDs sourced from a relative who worked at the PCSO.

"Little did I know that my desire to encourage him in his new venture would net me P200,000," he said, adding that the tickets enjoyed brisk sales in their neighborhood.

"My father started with one booklet sold. In no time, he had sold five booklets and neighbors were still coming to the house to purchase tickets," he said.

Asked on what he'd do with his winnings, the 29-year-old father of four said he and his wife who worked as a group manager at a fast-food joint – might venture into selling mop heads.

But then again, maybe he'd ask what his father thought was best.

Official Draw Results

Sweepstakes Daily Draw

Jackpot Prize: P100,000.00

Draw Date	Winning Combination						Draw Date	Winning Combination					
06-12-04	15	6	5	0	6	L	14-12-04	29	3	5	2	4	O
07-12-04	43	3	1	0	3	O	15-12-04	37	2	4	1	2	C
08-12-04	30	3	4	8	1	L	16-12-04	20	5	2	1	6	O
09-12-04	27	0	4	2	0	O	17-12-04	24	0	7	4	6	O
10-12-04	46	0	5	0	1	C	18-12-04	47	0	1	1	6	S
11-12-04	28	7	4	4	7	L	19-12-04	13	5	4	5	0	P
[illegible]-04	38	1	5	2	4	S	20-12-04	27	6	4	5	7	O
[illegible]	13	3	7	5	7	O							

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Estrada breaks down

From page A1

of pearls gleaming on her neck.

Toward the end of the Mass, Susan rose and sprinkled holy water on the casket, where the late actor lay in a blue suit. Others followed after, including former first lady Imelda Marcos—the only one in the long line of mourners to kiss the casket.

Estrada, with his family, arrived past 10 p.m.

One gray-haired woman knelt crying in front of the coffin.

Members of the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabayan acted as a security force in the church.

Long after the public viewing had ended, queues of people still lined up outside the packed church where the necrological rites were being held.

The necrological rites crowned the most massive wake in the country in decades.

Strains of love songs, like "Pangako Ko Sa 'Yo (My Promise to You)," rose over the church congregation as family, friends and followers gave their final tribute to the man simply called FPJ.

Politicians and the most glamorous of movie stars shared equal billing with ordinary folk in paying accolade. Some even called Poe a Santa Claus, recalling his generosity to the downtrodden.

Poe was not only "Da King" to his followers.

"This coming Christmas will be a sad one because the man we most love and whom we looked up to, the real Santa Claus, not only to his family but to his people, is gone," the actor's brother Conrad said.

In their styles, some politicians likened the man who made his mark in the movies to a modern-day hero comparable to revolutionaries.

Former Sen. Loren Legarda, Poe's running mate in the election, and Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile vowed to carry on Poe's fight for genuine change—but in a peaceful manner.

Show biz friends

The tributes from Poe's show biz friends, speaking Monday night in the church with their voices breaking with emotion, sounded less political.

"FPJ is worth fighting for, FPJ is worth dying for ... Till we meet again, Mr. President," movie actress Alona Alegre said, crying unabashedly, during the FPJ volunteers organizations' special tribute to their leader.

Alegre said the gathering was an occasion to mourn "the passing away of a president."

"Who is the truly elected president? Waking up is difficult when you know the government is in the hands of people who were not elected by the people," actor Niño Muhlach said.

An alternative

Manny Portes, chair of the FPJ Movement, said Poe came into the political scene just as the country was looking for an alternative to the traditional leaders.

Ka Amang Garcia, an urban poor leader, recalled the generosity of the movie actor who helped defray even the medical expenses of his followers.

FPJ's kindness was also echoed by Dr. John Seneca, who represented the Doctors for FPJ group. During the campaign, Seneca said FPJ was always checking around making sure "no one went hungry."

After his death, tales of Poe's kindness abounded, told and retold by relatives, staff members, friends in show biz and politics, employees at his studio and many fans.

Ironically, today was to have been the family reunion of the Poes.

In a sense it would be.

At around noon, Poe's remains will be sealed in his tomb at Manila's North Cemetery where he will lie in a family plot beside his younger brother and fellow actor Andy Poe Jr. Meters away lie their parents, Fernando Poe Sr. and Bessie Kelly.

Since yesterday, Malacañang has been on high alert, with container vans parked outside all roads leading to the Palace and ready to be used as barricades in case of any attempt by hotheads to turn the funeral into a political show of force. *(Story on this page.)*

The daily multitudes

Opposition leader Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. predicted a million people would join the march which will span a distance of 6.5 km from Sto. Domingo to North Cemetery. Others said they expected possibly twice that number.

As prepared by organizers, the march will swing away from the direction of Malacañang and turn right on A. H. Lacson Avenue en route to the cemetery.

The daily multitude of mourners who had trooped to Sto. Domingo Church since the wake began on Dec. 14—hours after Poe died of a severe stroke—was the biggest the country had seen since hundreds of thousands of people flocked to the wake and funeral of assassinated opposition leader Benigno Aquino in 1983.

Showers of confetti

The funeral march was to start at 4 a.m. and, if plans pushed through, showers of blue and white confetti will sail over Quezon Avenue as the march rolls past.

The actor's coffin was to be mounted on a hearse to be pulled by two white horses and Poe's campaign jingle "Bagong Umaga," used during his presidential election campaign, would be played.

Initially, organizers had said that Susan Roces would ride in a carriage following the hearse. But they later said that Roces wanted to march herself.

Blue dominates

The color blue, which Poe used in his presidential campaign, dominated the crowded Sto. Domingo Church yesterday afternoon.

The lace used in the access cards issued to the media and volunteers was also in blue.

After the close of public viewing last night a necrological service was to follow, with Poe's friend, Eddie Garcia, to deliver the first eulogy, according to a tentative program.

Other speakers were to include comics novelist Pablo Gomez, Richard Gomez, Aling Tinay Manahan, director Joel Lamangan, actress Boots Anson Roa, Dolphy, and finally, deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Roces, Poe's wife of three decades, was then to give a response.

At least seven songs, said to be among Poe's favorites, were to be sung by some of the most illustrious artists in the country, with Zsa Zsa Padilla and Tirso Cruz III rendering the opening number.

Other songs lined up were: "Kumusta Ka" by Janno Gibbs or Aiza Seguerra, "Ikaw" by Cris Villonco, "Doon Lang" by Nonoy Zuñiga, "Gaano ko Ikaw Kamahal" by Dulce, "Kahit na Magtiis" by Rico Puno and "Saan Ka Man Naroroon" by Rachel Alejandro. *Reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Michael Lim Ubac, Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau and Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Ka Roger hits police

A COMMUNIST spokesperson assailed police officials for insinuating that New People's Army rebels would disrupt today's funeral.

"That's only a malicious figment of their wild imagination. Maybe, the police are now being haunted by the ghost of FPJ because of the role they played in the massive cheating against the actor during the last election," Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal said in a mobile phone interview.

"Even the occupant of Malacañang is now also being bothered by FPJ's spirit. GMA cheated FPJ in the election," Rosal said.

'Be by my side,' GMA tells military

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

CLOSETED inside the Palace, President Macapagal-Arroyo called on the military to "be by my side" and fend off all destabilization threats.

She aired the call in a speech marking the hushed-up 69th anniversary of the Armed Forces which she delivered, not at the sprawling AFP grounds in Camp Aquinaldo, but in the safety of the Malacañang Ceremonial Hall.

"I expect you, the soldiers, to be by my side, to man the flanks by keeping all threats to national security at bay," Ms Arroyo said in a 45-minute ceremony attended by around 100 military officers and men. "I bid you to stand beside me in the quest for peace with honor, dignity and justice for all Filipinos."

As though addressing her enemies, the President warned: "No one should test the sensitivity of the Filipino soldier to the feelings of the Filipino people" or "question the loyalty of the soldier to our people."

"All the conspiracies that have attempted to withdraw the allegiance of the Armed Forces from my government have miserably failed. And I thank you once again for your loyalty," she said.

Ms Arroyo said the AFP and the entire nation were facing a "formidable challenge" as well as the "challenge of self-redemption."

Palace armed to the teeth; officials' entry thru back door

From page A1

ployees and guests were "encouraged" to use the Palace backdoor instead of the main access on JP Laurel Street.

"Let me clarify that we are expecting heavy traffic tomorrow, so instead of [having guests pass] through JP Laurel, we will accommodate some of those who want to use the Malacañang Park entry for easy access to Malacañang," he said.

Bangit said people could go to the Malacañang Park, which is across the Pasig River from Malacañang, where they would be ferried by barge to the Palace.

Upgraded security

He said "additional troops" would be stationed at the parking lot near the Chino Roces (Mendiola) gate.

The PSG issued a "security advisory" saying that "security arrangements" in the Palace complex would be "upgraded" today.

"Everyone will be subjected to very strict inspections and access controls... Your utmost understanding and cooperation on these temporary security arrangements will be highly appreciated," the advisory said.

The security measures include:

- No parking on Mendiola Street, Mabini grounds and the New Executive Building grounds.
- Public utility vehicles such as jeepneys and taxis will not be allowed in the complex.
- All gates (1 to 7) will be closed to vehicles.

"In this connection, all [Office of the President] employees and officials are advised to park their vehicles at the Malacañang Park. They will be ferried by boat toward the Mabini Landing Barge," the PSG said.

PNP appeal

"Please go home after the burial," this was the appeal of the Philippine National Police to those who would escort Poe to his grave.

Reiterating the apprehension of authorities that some Poe supporters might use today's funeral march from the Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City to the North Cemetery in Manila to launch a political action against Malacañang, Director Avelino Razon Jr., chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, urged the mourners not to heckle or provoke policemen deployed to provide security and order.

"We hope they will not do anything that will destroy the good name of Fernando Poe. We have had so many bad news lately. Let us not add to them," Razon told the INQUIRER.

He said police officers numbering at least 1,400 had also been ordered to keep their cool, especially in the event that provocateurs manage to infiltrate the mourners' ranks.

But Supt. Cesar Javier, Manila traffic director, is not optimistic. "The burial is expected to be finished at noon, but I don't think FPJ's fans would leave at once," he said.

Nevertheless, the mourners will not be met by tear gas, water cannons or truncheon-wielding policemen, unlike what happened at the height of the pro-Poe mass actions after the May presidential election.

The Manila traffic cops who will monitor the funeral march and the situation inside the North Cemetery will not even carry firearms so as not to antagonize the mourners, said Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong, director of the Western Police District.

He told the INQUIRER that only the members of the reaction teams and of the Special Weapons and Tactics teams positioned outside the cemetery would be allowed to carry guns.

"But there would still be enough policemen to respond if an untoward incident takes place. The organizers of Poe's funeral have also assured us that they can police their own ranks," Bulaong said.

Maximum tolerance

Razon said Task Force FPJ, the composite police unit assigned to handle traffic, route security and crowd control would not include crowd dispersal teams.

He said such teams would be positioned at a safe distance from the march.

"The key here is patience and maximum tolerance," Senior Supt. Nicasio Radovan Jr., Task Force FPJ commander, told the INQUIRER on Monday.

A reserve force of at least 1,000 policemen from Regions 1 to 5 and the Cordillera Administrative Region arrived yesterday at Camp Crame. Its members will be deployed in the event that the crowd becomes unruly.

"Even if we are taunted, kicked or spat at, we should not mind it so as not to create trouble," said Javier. "It may be hard for some policemen, but they have to do it and just understand the emotions of the people."

But Javier also said police would draw the line at criminal activities. Should some of the mourners get into physical fights with other mourners, he said, police would try to intervene.

To avoid any untoward incident, Razon said the mourners should leave immediately after the burial.

This way, he said, they would also help ease the traffic congestion made worse by the Christmas rush.

Destabilization

"I refuse to comment on that," Bangit said when asked whether the PSG had received reports of a destabilization plot.

Gen. Efren Abu, AFP chief of staff, said he had not received such reports. "Those threats have always been there, but we have not heard anything [specific]. But our chain of command is intact," he told reporters after the ceremony marking the AFP's anniversary.

Abu also said he did not expect violence during Poe's funeral.

"No [threats]," he said. "The mood is festive. You know this is a relationship between an actor and a fan, so I don't think there will be violence—unless there are some [elements] who want to sow chaos."

Abu said the AFP red alert had been in effect since Dec. 12 and would be in place "until such time we feel we are safe."

Asked if the alert would continue until after Poe's burial, he said: "We cannot say that because there are still threats from the [communist rebels] to wreak havoc during this Christmas holiday."

Supporting role

The AFP is deploying about 2,500 soldiers to augment the PNP security force, Abu told reporters at Camp Aguinaldo.

But he said the military's National Capital Region Command (NCRCom) would only play a supporting role to the PNP.

Abu said the augmentation units would come from the Army's Special Forces, the Air Force's Special Operations Wing, the Marines, and standby units from the Northern Luzon and Southern Luzon Commands.

"At the moment, we have about five battalions on stand-by," he said.

A regular AFP battalion is composed of not less than 500 troops. *With a report from Alcuin Papa*

The pall bearers

TWO GROUPS of pall bearers—one political, one show biz—will bear the casket of Fernando Poe Jr. at his funeral today, fellow movie star and friend Rez Cortéz said.

The political group:
Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay
Rep. Francis Escudero
Sen. Jinggoy Estrada
Mayor JV Ejercito
Rep. Justin Chipeco
Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco
Former Senators Tito Sotto, Gringo Honasan

The show biz group:
Richard Gomez
Nino Muhlach
Dolphy
Eddie Garcia
Philip Salvador
Tony Tuviera
Rez Cortez and driver Caloy

Stay away from roads, cemetery

Those who are not Poe supporters or fans are advised to stay away from the North Cemetery and roads leading to it so as not to be stuck in traffic, said Manila traffic director Javier.

He said he expected the traffic to ease up only around 4 p.m.

The funeral march is scheduled to pass España Boulevard and Lacson and Dimasalang Streets in Manila before heading to the North Cemetery.

Javier said that once the march had reached the Mabuhay Rotunda, both lanes of España Boulevard would be closed to traffic if the mourners prove too numerous for one lane.

He said Lacson and Dimasalang would also be closed once the march gets there.

Motorists wanting to use España will be directed to Rizal, Abad Santos and E. Rodriguez Avenues. Trucks will be directed to Road 10 and C-3.

Javier also said that aside from the expected traffic jams resulting from the funeral march, Manila roads near the Osmeña Highway had also been experiencing heavy traffic.

He said this was because road repair was suddenly started on the Manila-bound lane of the highway on Monday afternoon. *Leila B. Salaverria*

JDV daughter's burial 'a celebration of her life'

From page A1

San Antonio in Makati after a 9 a.m. Mass today.

The youngest daughter of Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. and Georgina Vera Perez, KC or Ma. Kristina Casimira, 16, died in a fire that gutted the family residence at No. 2288 Magnolia St. in Dasmariñas Village, Makati, in the late evening of Dec. 16.

"To emphasize that this is a celebration of her life, the family has requested friends, supporters and sympathizers to come in white and pastel colors," according to a statement released by De Venecia's spokesperson Emmanuel Albano.

"KC's life was brief but joyous. We are inspired by her grace, her zest for living and her hunger to engage the world," KC's siblings Leslie de Venecia Norton and Philip Cruz said in a statement.

'A firecracker'

"How we will miss KC! She has taught us a lot about living," the two added.

Leslie and Philip recalled that KC was "impatient, outspoken, and a fast-thinker. She was a firecracker. She was infinitely precious to us."

Speaker De Venecia is expected to deliver a statement on behalf of the family in today's rites.

Cousins from both the De Venecia and Vera Perez clans will offer baskets of fruits and flowers during the offertory.

Philip will offer wine and water, while KC's older brother Christopher will carry the ciborium containing the consecrated eucharistic bread.

KC's classmates from Colegio San Agustin and International School will also offer fruits and flowers.

"During the send-off, about 500 butterflies will be released at the church's garden together with as many white balloons that family friends say will help convey KC's spirit to God's warm embrace," Albano said.

Songs by Lea Salonga

The Mass of Resurrection, as the final service is called, will be concelebrated by Bishop Antonio Tobias, Msgr. Augusto Laban, Msgr. Jaime Boquiren and Fr. Antonio Rosales, the parish priest of the Santuario.

International singer and Broadway star Lea Salonga will sing KC's favorite songs during the offertory and communion, as well as the Lord's Prayer and a final number during the recessional.

"Lea is a good friend of the family and KC adored her," Albano said, quoting an unnamed family member.

Lea will be accompanied by brother Gerard who, in turn, will perform a duet with Danita Paner, one of KC's closest friends.

After the send-off, members of the De Venecia and Vera Perez families will gather for a private ceremony before KC's remains are interred.

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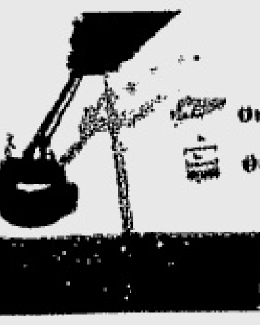

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Traffic enforcer shows that honesty in public service still exists

By Ruth L. Navarra

HONESTY is not just a word.

Pasig City traffic enforcer Ador Cruz Jr. got a taste of the limelight recently when he returned P150,000 to its owner last Sunday afternoon.

The 22-year-old Cruz was on duty when he saw a yellow ladies' wallet on M.H. Del Pilar Street in Pasig City.

"People were just passing by it," he said. He picked it up and hailed a tricycle so he could take the wallet to the barangay outpost of San Nicolas.

Curious, he took a peek and saw that it contained wads of money in US and Philippine currency.

He said that he did not dare open it again because he feared that he would be accused of taking some of it. When they reached the barangay station, they counted the bills and it amounted to P150,000.

Barangay officials then formed a team to look for the wallet's owner.

They found the owner, Rowena Santos, inside the Immaculate Concepcion Parish Church, where she went back to look for the wallet.

They recognized her through the picture in the wallet.

Cruz said Santos was speechless when she got her money back.

"I am happy that she got her money back. Imagine, she worked for six months in Japan for that," Cruz said.

He refused the P500 reward that Santos gave him but was prompted to take it when she became adamant about it.

"Is that okay?" He asked this reporter as if he was breaking a major crime against ethics.

The P150,000 could have paid for his and his sibling's tuition or the mortgage on their house.

He could have used it to give his family a brief taste of comfort.

But his family was the very reason he was not tempted by it.

"I believe in karma. I do not want anything bad to happen to me or my family," he said.

While his father works as a carpenter and his mother sells food at their house on Mendoza Street, Brgy. Buting, Cruz acts as the family breadwinner, being the eldest of seven children.

He has been a Pasig traffic enforcer for only two months.

He stopped attending the Philippine College of Criminology in Manila because his family could not afford his tuition.

Now, he supports the education of his two siblings.

Cruz cried when he talked about his 12-year-old sister and 6-year-old brother, both of whom, he related, were special children.

"I sometimes get into fights because of them," he said. "Our neighbors would make fun of them. Sometimes they would come home with bruises."

For his honesty, Pasig Mayor Vicente P. Eusebio rewarded him with a Study Now Pay Later plan and a cash gift of P5,000. The Knights of Columbus will also give him a plaque of recognition and a cash reward.

He said he was overwhelmed by the blessings that he had been receiving.

"It is too much, but I am thankful," he said.

Home for Christmas

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE PROMISE of spending Christmas with his loved ones has filled Dennis Morales' thoughts night and day for three years now.

But Christmas this year will be different for the 20-year-old Leyte native who had stayed the longest inside the Manila Youth Reception Center (MYRC), a city-run holding center for juveniles aged 9 to 17 years old "in conflict with the law" under the Manila Department of Social Welfare (MDSW).

With 25 other detainees, Morales was ordered released on Monday after pending cases were heard inside the Justice on Wheels mobile court, a project of the Supreme Court launched to decongest detention facilities nationwide by reaching areas without court houses.

"*Gusto ko uling makapag-Pasko sa labas. Malungkot ang Pasko dito, nag-iiyakan kami, naiisip namin pamilya namin* (I want to experience Christmas outside a detention center. Christmas here is sad since we just end up crying as we think of our families)," said Morales.

"The judge might have taken pity on me. She said I was free to go, but I would have to report after a month to my lawyer," he added.

Morales was arrested for carrying his brother-in-law's 45-caliber pistol while inside the Rizal Park during election season in 2001 when he was just 16 years old.

"*Trip lang* (I did it just for kicks)," said Morales, when asked why he carried a gun on that Luneta stroll.

His case had been pending before the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 9, one of seven family courts severely burdened by the sheer volume of pending cases involving minors.

But that changed when the Justice On Wheels project parked its first mobile court at the MYRC grounds, bringing the encouraging message: "Our courts are driven to serve you better."

On its pilot marathon hearings on Monday, the MYRC-based mobile court heard 54 cases involving theft and robbery, possession of illegal drugs or substances such as rugby, illegal possession of firearms, and vagrancy, among others.

Manila RTC Judge Amelia Tria-Infante dismissed Morales' case, provisionally granting him freedom as the complainant had missed three years of hearings. If the complainant does not appear to pursue the case after two years, Morales' case would be permanently dismissed.

"In my three-year stay at the Center, I learned how to relate to others and establish relationships. It changed me a lot. I learned how to give respect and love to others," said MYRC's oldest detainee, who added that he was a "big brother" to the rest of the detainees.

Morales said he plans to find a job before returning to his family in Leyte.

He has never seen or heard from them in his years of detention as he had cut off all communication because he did not want them to know what had happened to him.

The mobile court will stay at the MYRC until it processes all pending cases involving minors, said MDSW chief Jose Baranda. Then, it moves on to Quezon City.

"This will help us relieve the overcrowding inside the MYRC," he added. "We can also save since there are less people to feed."

Regular hearings begin next year.

JUSTICE ON WHEELS
to Serve You Better

COURT on wheels temporarily parked at the grounds of the Manila Youth Reception Center in Antonio Villegas Street (formerly Arroceros) promises swift justice for youth with pending cases. ERIK ARAZAS

Rerouting bared for FPJ burial

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) has announced alternative routes for motorists during today's burial of actor Fernando Poe Jr.

MMDA Traffic Operations Center Executive Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said that beginning midnight last night, España and Dimasalang Streets has been closed to vehicles.

Motorists going to Manila on Quezon Avenue are advised to turn right to Araneta Avenue straight to C-3 Road then to Rizal Avenue Ext. toward Jose Abad Santos station.

Also, motorists could turn left from Quezon Avenue to Araneta Avenue then to Aurora Boulevard straight to Ramon Magsaysay Boulevard straight to C.M. Recto.

The traffic chief advises Project 6 jeepney drivers to take Timog and Tomas Morato, and Project 8 drivers to pass through Scout Chuatoco or Del Monte Avenue instead of Quezon Avenue.

Organizers of the funeral procession for the late actor expect about a million of his sympathizers to assemble in the area of the Sto. Domingo Church along Quezon Avenue.

He said the MMDA would deploy 125 motorcycle units and assign fixed posts to 500 traffic enforcers.

SWT scheme boon to traffic—MMDA

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE IMPLEMENTATION of the Staggered Working Time (SWT) has eased up traffic in the metropolis, according to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

Based on a report of the MMDA-Metrobase, private vehicles using Edsa's northbound lane now travel as fast as 32.67 kilometers per hour, while those on the southbound lane traveled at 35.73 kph.

Metrobase also reported that passenger buses now traveled at 22.42 kph on Edsa's northbound and southbound lanes.

"Traffic on Edsa improved slightly in the past two days," MMDA Traffic Operations Center Executive Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said.

But he added that the improvement was also because there were less vehicles on the road at this time of the year.

"Traffic was expected to be lighter because of the schools' Christmas break," Vergel de Dios said.

He also clarified that traffic speed worsened on the first day of the scheme's implementation because it coincided with the Department of Public Works and Highways' project patching potholes along Edsa's northbound lane.

Under the scheme, government workers were required to work from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., while private employees were asked to report from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

MMDA officials also said motorists passing through arterial roads near the shopping malls experienced heavy traffic, especially in the late afternoon and early evening. MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando attributed the problem to the growing number of Christmas shoppers.

The majority of Metro Manila's local government units, including the cities of Malabon, Valenzuela, Las Piñas, Parañaque, Marikina, Navotas, Manila, Pasay, Quezon City, and the municipality of Pateros, abide by the scheme.

However, the cities of Makati, Mandaluyong and Muntinlupa, and the municipality of Taguig said they were against the implementation of the scheme.

A gift of livelihood for boy's family

By Ruth L. Navarra

THIS CHRISTMAS, a simple act of kindness is better than anything that could be wrapped.

In the hundreds of letters that Mandaluyong City received for their annual gift-giving program dubbed as "Dear Mayor," one stood out.

The letter, which was read in Maysilo Circle yesterday, came from a teacher of a grade five class in Highway Hills Elementary School.

In a three-page letter on a yellow pad, Honorata Gonzales narrated how an 11-year-old Roger Flores touched her life.

She said that she had known Flores as a playful and active child who participated in class.

Lately, however, the boy no longer paid attention in the class.

Flores, the second of four boys, then told her that he had been helping his mother selling cigarettes at nights to help his mother support their family.

Their father died when he was 9 years old.

Once, Gonzales recalled, the boy gave her a piece of candy then quickly ran out of the class.

Gonzales found herself crying when she realized she was holding the livelihood of Flores' family. Yet, Roger gave it to her.

She wrote Mayor Neptali Gonzales II asking for a permanent livelihood for the family.

The city has given the mother of Flores, Tita, a *carinderia* showcase of pots, pans, stove and dinnerware worth around P10,000. They were also given three food packages for their Noche Buena and P8,000 cash.

Tita Flores said that they would set up their *carinderia* at their home at 794 Sinag St., Brgy. Mauway, Mandaluyong.

On the same program, 14 disabled residents received wheelchairs and strollers from private companies and individuals.

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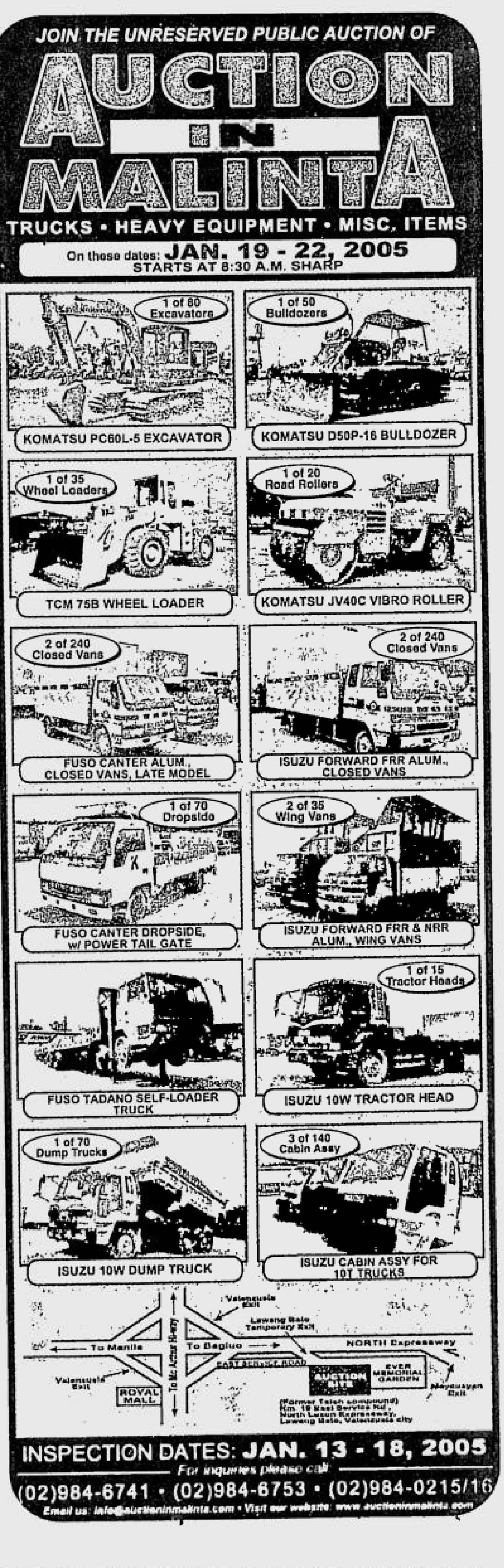
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NBA—Mavs vs Knicks; 8:30 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Solar Sports—Dallas visits New York.
FOOTBALL: Spanish Football League; tomorrow at 4 a.m.; ESPN—Real Madrid meets Sevilla.
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Compiled by L. Manguiat

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SPORTSWOMAN/SPORTSMAN OF YEAR

Rosales, Pacquiao toasts of 2004

ROSALES: Breakthrough season

PACQUIAO: Record third straight award

Awards night set Jan. 13

J-RO and Pacman.
Two individuals of different statures, but enjoyed similar amount of success in the year about to end.

From Georgia to Las Vegas in a week's span last summer in the United States, golf star Jennifer Rosales and ring idol Manny Pacquiao showcased the stuff Filipino athletes are made of as they turned in worthy performances in the face of world-class opposition.

Rosales, the lady they fondly called J-Ro, ended her long title drought in the tough LPGA Tour by winning the Chick-Fil-A Championship at the expense of some of the world's finest golfers in Stockbridge, Georgia.

The triumph, worth $240,000 (P13.44 million), cemented Rosales' status as one of the game's emerging stars, a reputation she would further enhance by year's end when she crashed the Top 10 of the tour's money list.

Barely a week after that, Pacquiao battled World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation featherweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez to a controversial split draw during their highly-anticipated 12-round title fight at the MGM Grand Arena.

The 26-year-old pride and joy of General Santos City dubbed Pacman, floored his tough Mexican foe three times in the first round, and if not for a contentious scoring by one of the judges, could have won his third world title.

Together, their impressive exploits are definitely one for the ages, living proof that Filipino athletes are truly world-class.

Owing to that and for warming the hearts of Filipino fans in these trying times, the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA) last night named Rosales and Pacquiao as its Sportswoman and Sportsman of the Year. They will be honored during the PSA Annual Awards Night on Jan. 13 at the Manila Pavilion.

The two lead the more than 60 athletes and entities to be feted during a 90-minute rite to be held by the country's oldest group of media practitioners.

The award will be a record third straight for Pacquiao, having been also bestowed the highest accolade given by the PSA in 2002 and 2003. The 25-year-old Rosales made it for the first time.

ROSALES/ A26

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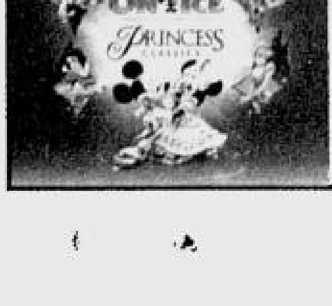

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Rosales, Pacquiao share top PSA honors for 2004

From page A25

Special awards are to be given to billiards player Alex Pagulayan for winning the 2004 World Pool Championship in Taipei and Olympians Jasmin Figeuroa and Marie Antoinette Rivero following their inspiring showing in the Athens Olympics.

Four-time PBA Most Valuable Player Alvin Patrimonio is the recipient of the Presidential Award while outgoing Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit will be honored with the Leadership Award.

Chess Grandmaster Nelson Mariano and GM-candidate Mark Paragua head the recipients of the major awards that include Liza del Rosario (bowling), Francisco "Django" Bustamante and Efren "Bata" Reyes (billiards), Rhyan Tanguilig (cycling), Gabriel Espinas (amateur basketball), Angelo Que (golf) and Pat Dilema (horseracing).

Eleven-year-old chess player Wesley So will receive the year's Tony Siddayao award, given to exceptional young athletes.

To be elevated to the Hall of Fame are former Asian sprint queens Lydia de Vega-Mercado and Mona Sulaiman of athletics and basketball greats Carlos Loyzaga and Lauro Mumar of basketball.

The complete list of awardees:

Sportswoman/Sportsman of the Year
Jennifer Rosales/Manny Pacquiao
Special Awards
Alex Pagulayan
Jasmin Figueroa
Marie Antoinette Rivero
Presidential Award
Alvin Patrimonio
Major Awards
Mark Paragua/Nelson Mariano III (chess)
Liza del Rosario (bowling)
Francisco "Django" Bustamante/Efren "Bata" Reyes (billiards)
Rhyan Tanguilig (cycling)
Gabriel Espinas (amateur basketball)
Angelo Que (golf)
Patti Dilema (horseracing)
Tony Siddayao Award
Wesley So
Leadership Award
Celso Dayrit
Hall of Fame
Mona Sulaiman/Lydia de Vega (athletics)
Caloy Loyzaga/Lauro Mumar (basketball)
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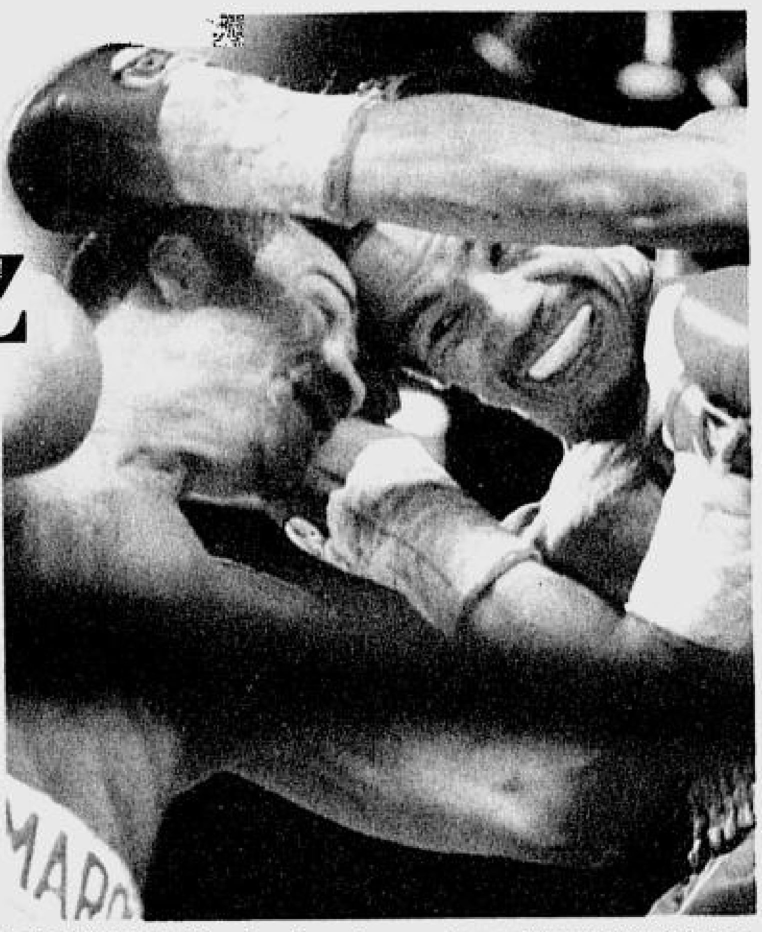
Outstanding National Sports Associations: Taekwondo, Badminton

Pacquiao vs Marquez II in peril?

No deal yet on fight terms

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*


PACQUIAO (right) mixes it up close quarters with world dual champ Juan Manuel Marquez. The clash ended in a split draw. REUTERS

THE SECOND encounter between Ring Magazine featherweight king Manny Pacquiao and WBA/IBF champ Juan Manuel Marquez is not yet etched in stone.

Ignacio Beristain, the manager of Marquez, declared the other day that although the fight between his ward and Pacquiao has already been announced to take place on Feb. 26 in Las Vegas, the proposed fight is still "shaky at best" as "it has not yet been negotiated."

Sources in Mexico said the Marquez and Pacquiao camps have not agreed fight terms and purses.

"In Las Vegas, they have already set the date for him (Marquez) to fight Pacquiao, but the reality is that there is nothing," Beristain said in an interview with a leading Mexican boxing website.

"For this fight to push through, we must first sit down to negotiate the contract."

Beristain said he plans to talk to officials of Top Rank, promoter of Marquez, about the details of the much-awaited fight.

"But let me tell you this, Marquez is already training in the mountains for this fight and we are ready for Pacquiao," the manager said.

The Feb. 26 showdown between two of the world's finest featherweights will be a grudge rematch. Their previous encounter ended in a split draw despite three knockdowns suffered by the Mexican in the first round.

Pacquiao, fresh off a fourth-round stoppage of Thai Fahsan 3K Battery last Dec. 11 in Taguig, is said to be undergoing light training in General Santos City.

He is scheduled to leave for the United States to hook up with American trainer Freddie Roach in early January.

Pacquiao reportedly refused to sign a two-fight contract presented to him by his US promoter, Murad Muhammad, during his birthday recently.

The contract sets his Feb. 26 showdown with Marquez as well as a proposed rumble in July with Mexican ring legend Erik Morales.

Philsoc plots RP bid for SEAG title

PHILIPPINE Southeast Asian Games organizing committee (Philsoc) chair Obet Pagdanganan will meet with heads of national sports associations to determine the country's chances of capturing the overall crown in next year's biennial meet.

The meeting, slated in the first week of January, will also seek to identify the gold medal prospects of the Philippine contingent.

"We will have a series of meetings with the NSA heads to assess our chances of beating Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand for the overall championship," said Pagdanganan.

The meeting will also discuss the most cost-efficient way to run the budget-plagued Games, a suggestion made by the committee on ways and means headed by Philsoc vice chair Go Teng Kok.

"While we want to have as many events and sports as possible, we are also looking at the cost efficiency of the program," said Pagdanganan.

He noted that the marketing arm of the SEAG 2005 has already started work despite the fact that prevailing economic conditions is affecting efforts to raise the resources required for hosting the Games.

The ways and means committee has suggested that some sports could be eliminated to save on cost.

"The Philsoc should be open to making adjustments so that we can wisely use our limited resources," said Go.

Kaya, Army forge Globe Super Cup titular clash

KAYA FC and Philippine Army crushed their respective rivals Monday to arrange a showdown for the NCRFA Globe Handy Phone Super Cup football title today at the PhilSports field in Pasig City.

Alfredo Gonzales knocked in three goals as Kaya blasted Far Eastern University, 5-1, while Army blanked University of Santo Tomas, 6-0, for its fifth straight win in the tournament organized by the National Capital Region Football Association and sponsored by Globe.

Kaya and Army clash at 7 p.m. today after the 4:30 contest between FEU and UST for third place.

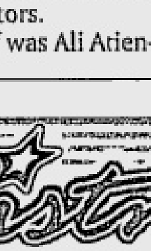
Gonzales struck in the third, 68th and 77th minutes.

Christian Lozano and Ariel Zerrudo .produced the other Kaya markers.

Fearing for the Tour

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad



THERE'S this fear that the Tour Pilipinas, the annual cycling spectacle that never fails to light up the countryside, may not get on the road next summer.

Reason given was lack of money.

There were available funds, but these would also be spent for the staging of the 2005 Southeast Asian Games.

That's according to former Tour champ Jess Garcia Jr., who claimed organizers should've not staged a two-day Tour elimination race on Dec. 7-8 in the first place.

Other than pay the P200 entry fee for the elimination series, cyclists had invested heavily with their time and equipment ahead of the Tour proper.

Unfair, cried Cycling Jess, a native of Mangaldan who has spent a good part of his life supporting the Pangasinan contingent year after year.

***

Of course, there would be other big losers if the Tour gets shelved again.

The multi-staged cycling classic, which has produced worthy heroes from the working breed, has become a great part of Philippine summer.

It's the single most relevant national sports event that never fails to bring joy and hope in the grassroots areas.

It would indeed be a pity if it gets shelved.

The annual cycling marathon may be the only idea among poor kids in sleepy, far-flung barrios of what true sports is all about.

The SEA Games may indeed be a monumental event, but small people have reason to fear the shelving of the Tour.

***

THERE'S a possibility a new Philippine Sports Commission chair may be named based mainly on the urgency of the situation, not to mention the noise of power brokers.

So far, two in the so-called trio left to contest the PSC top post have had their great share of publicity and endorsement from influential sectors.

Left to plod for himself was Ali Atienza, a gold medalist in the 1994 Asian taekwondo championship.

It may sound odd, but Atienza was not too willing to stand on that rare feat in his bid for the PSC chairmanship.

Winning medals and running a national sports agency are two totally different concerns, the son of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza swears.

***

But you have the strongest backer in your father, Ali was told by this reporter.

"Sorry, sir, but it's not in his style to pull strings for us," the young Atienza explained. "He leaves us to fight our own fight."

For the record, Ali also happens to head Manila Sports Council, which has been staging the Manila Youth Games.

The successful Kasali Ka! grassroots sports development program was also his brainchild.

Of course, these could be insignificant in the eyes' of those who would make the final pick for the PSC top post.

But hold it. Ali, the youngest among the aspirants, may not have strong backers.

But he's the only one among those running for the PSC chairmanship who's ready and willing to set up a national sports academy.

In case, you're wondering, this academy happens to be the program backbone of successful sports countries like China and Australia.

Setting up one here should help end the long-running mediocrity in Philippine sports.

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Superal storms ahead by 10 in Young Guns golf

WOLEN Superal carded an impressive four-over-par 76 from the blue tees and stormed ahead by 10 strokes in the boys' 12 years division in the Young Guns 2004 International jungolf championships at the Legends course of the Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club in Carmona, Cavite.

But except for Superal's stirring show, tight duels punctuated the first day of the foreign-flavored tournament.

Superal, aching to make amends for a disqualification in his previous outing, used his power off the tee to break away from Franz Olea, who had an 86.

Remo Fueg, whose family is based in Switzerland, and the fancied Miguel Tabuena shot identical 73s and shared the lead in the 10 years category.

AR Ramos also found company at the top in Mark Anthony Arevalo after both submitted 9-hole scores of 37.

Cebu bet Jan Jan Ybanez's 75 put him one stroke up on Marcel Puyat in the 11 years class, and JP de Claro's 72 led Jefferson Go (73) in the 9 years category of the event sponsored by the International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI), Smart Kids, Gatorade, Absolute Mineral Water, Golf Depot through Joey Mendoza, Egay San Luis, Provil, Share Exchange and Manila Southwoods. Bellevue in Alabang, is the official hotel.

SUPERAL: hot ROGER MARGALLO

Justin Faustino Dy had a more comfortable lead in the 7 years bracket. He shot a 43 to lead Joseph Kano by five strokes.

The girls' competitions saw Regina de Guzman and four others opening up commanding leads heading into today's final round.

De Guzman fired an 80 and showed up Angelika Datingaling by 18 shots in the 12 years class.

Ma-an Legaspi returned a 74 to post a 10-stroke lead over Katya dela Cruz in the division for 11 year olds, while Cristina Potenciano tallied a 75 that gave her a nine-shot spread over Angela de Villa in the 10 years category. De Villa fired an 84.

Andie Unson and Jamie Yu led the 9 years and 8-under divisions, respectively.

Unson, scoring an 80, finished the day five up on Marve Mosalve and Yu's nine-hole effort of 33 was seven shots better than the 40 of Princess Superal, the younger sister of Wolen.

PDI PHOTO

KERBY Raymundo hopes to lead the Hotdogs to the No. 4 spot in the wild-card phase.

Purefoods shoots for No.4 vs FedEx

PUREFOODS would have wanted something grander to shoot for on a night which the PBA picked to host a formal farewell party for the greatest player ever to wear the team's uniform.

But as it is, the TJ Hotdogs will be gunning for a tie for the No. 4 spot when they face the FedEx Express at 6:30 p.m. today in the Gran Matador Philippine Cup at the Philsports Arena.

Then again, even with a win, the TJ Hotdogs share of fourth place is dependent on San Miguel Beer, which has to lose a game or two to keep Purefoods' hopes alive for the No. 4 slot.

The No. 3 and 4 teams at the end of the elimination round will have twice-to-beat edges going into the wild card phase.

The TJ Hotdogs (8-9) are embroiled in a three-cornered fight for the fourth slot with the Beermen (8-8) and the Alaska Aces (8-9). The Beermen and the Barangay Ginebra Kings are playing at presstime in Laoag City.

The top three spots have already been conceded to Talk N Text, Ginebra and Shell.

In case of a tie at the No. 4 spot, there will be a one-game playoff for a two-way tie.

In the other game, Red Bull and Sta. Lucia Realty hope to avoid the last two playoff berths in the wildcard phase. Coming off a three-game slide, the Barako (6-10) are hoping to check their misfortunes, overtake the Express (6-10) and further bury the Realtors (5-11) in the pits. June Navarro

STANDINGS	W	L
Talk 'N Text	12	5
Shell	12	6
*Ginebra	11	5
*SMB	8	8
Alaska	8	9
Purefoods	8	9
Coca-Cola	7	10
FedEx	6	10
Red Bull	6	10
Sta. Lucia Realty	5	11

*still playing at presstime

GAMES TODAY
(*Philsports Arena*)
4 p.m.—Red Bull vs Sta. Lucia Realty
6:30 p.m.—FedEx vs Purefoods

Southridge nips Ateneo for RR under-14 crown

SOUTHRIDGE School banked on a strike by Migs Itchon in the 29th minute to beat defending champion Ateneo, 1-0, and top the National Capital Region leg of the 2004 Red Ribbon Football Fiesta at the Ateneo pitch in Katipunan on Sunday.

Southridge striker Justus Fieldler was brought down just outside the box, and Itchon rose to the occasion by curling a direct free kick over the Ateneo defensive wall.

Nathan Alquiros, Southridge's team captain, partnered with Greggy Yang to dictate the pace in the first half. Alquiros was later named the tournament's MVP.

The bigger, heftier Ateneans tried to step up the attack in the second half, but solid defending by Daniel Kahn, stopper Adrianne Bernardo and goalkeeper Andy Tan repeatedly foiled the hosts.

Southridge coach Chito Manuel thanked the parents of his wards for contributing to the team's victory.

The event is the official Under-14 tournament of the Philippine Football Federation and was organized in Metro Manila by Domeka Garamendi, its deputy-general secretary.

The tournament also served as a scouting ground for the LEAD Institute For Sport, which is teaming up with the PFF in searching for members of the RP Under-14 team.

TOMMY HILFIGER
watches
NoCurfew

Super 2-cock derby at Pasay today

ABOUT 150 fights are scheduled at the start today of the "Super 2-Cock Ulutan with Fastest Kill" derby at the air-conditioned Pasay City Cockpit. The event, which kicks off at 9 a.m., is supported by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, Sagupaan Mite Free and Sagupaan B-50 Forten. The total guaranteed prize at stake is P300,000 while entry fee is P2,200, according to derby host Reirei Cabial. The champion will get P10,000; second placer, P8,000; third, P5,500; fourth to sixth, P3,000 plus a microwave oven each. The seventh to tenth placers will receive one sack of rice and a rice cooker each. The remaining champions will share in the P100,000 prize. In the fastest kill category, the winner will get P30,000 and a personal refrigerator; second placer P20,000 and 21-inch color TV; third, P15,000 and washing machine. Registration of entries start at 7 a.m. today. For inquiries, call 8431890, 8431746 and 8166750.

Rich Active chess tilt set

THE COUNTRY'S richest Active Chess tournament fires off on March 4 next year at the Speaker Jose B. Laurel Memorial Gymnasium in Tanauan City. The tournament, billed as the 1st Tanauan Chess Open—Mayor's Cup, dangles P100,000 for the champion, said the organizing Active Chess Center of Asia. The event is backed by the First Asia Institute and the city government of Tanauan and sanctioned by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines.

TRIATHLON BRASS
Triathlon Association of the Philippines (TRAP) president and Asian representative to the International Triathlon Union (ITU) executive board Tom Carrasco (center, standing), with TRAP secretary general Ramon Marchan (left) and coaching commission chair Raul Cuevas, keep in touch with ITU president Les McDonald (seated left) and vice president Chic Igaya of Japan during the ITU congress in Vancouver, Canada, recently.

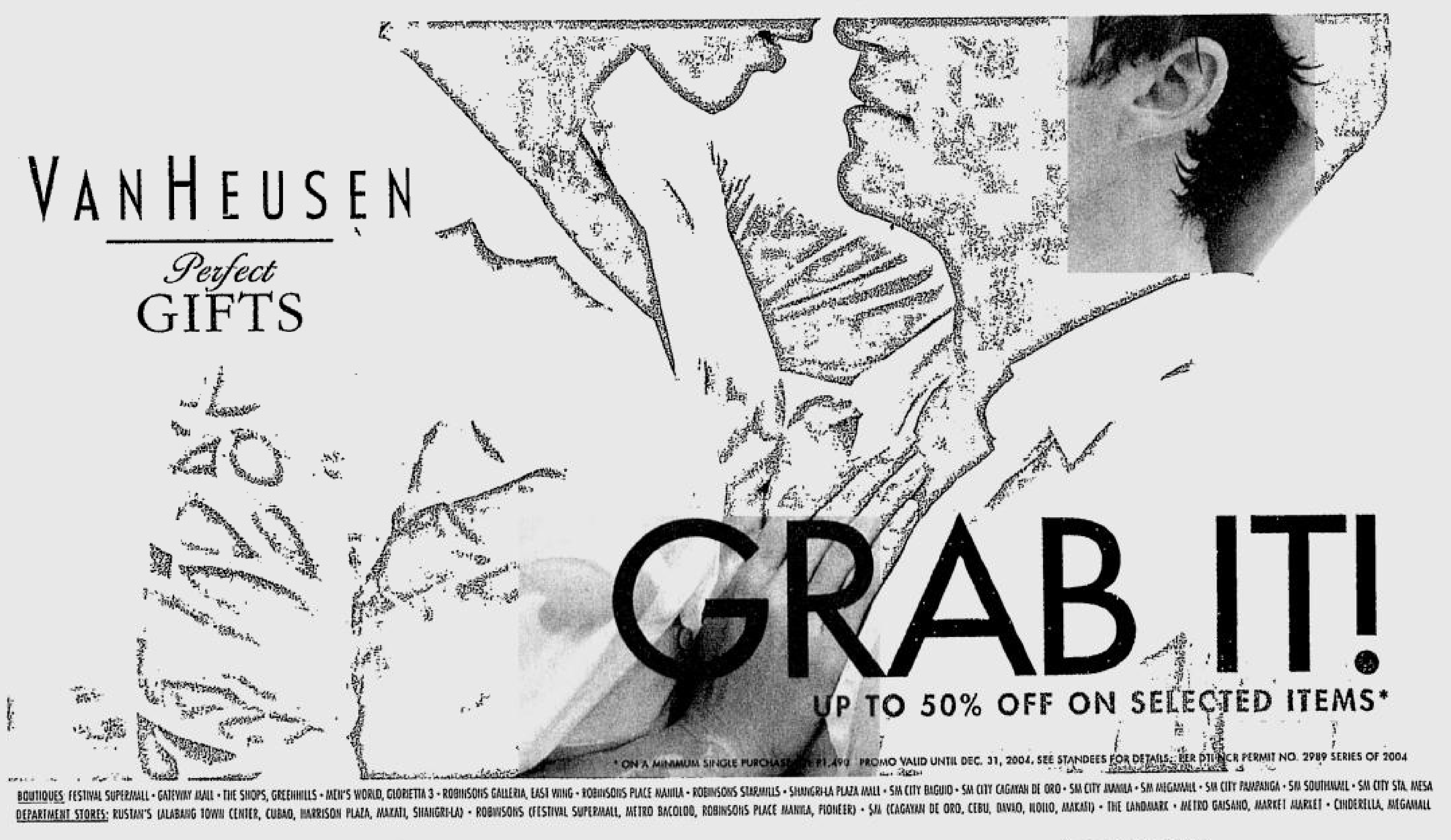
Borja splashes way to 2nd gold

BACOLOD CITY—Eleven-year-old prodigy Banjo Borja stole the thunder from the veterans Monday in the national tryouts of the Philippine Amateur Swimming Association at the Panaad Olympic pool.

Borja, a native of Laguna, clocked 2:28.85 to break the qualifying time of 2:30.50 in the 200 IM. He was the only entry to qualify on the second day of the four-day event.

"It was amazing, I didn't know that I beat the qualifying mark," said Borja, who also took home his second gold medal after beating Anjo Mabus and Jesse Ariola.

Borja also won the gold in the boys' 11-12 class. With his feat, Borja boosted his chances to get his first ever slot in the national team age-group division this year.



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CHRIS WEBBER

Utah spoils Iverson's 51

Chicago puts on good show for His Airness, raps Blazers

PHILADELPHIA—Allen Iverson became only the seventh player in NBA history to score at least 50 points in consecutive games, but he fouled out with 4.5 seconds left, putting Mehmet Okur on the line for the winning freethrows in Utah's 103-101 victory over the 76ers on Monday night.

Iverson followed up his 54-point game in Milwaukee with 51 this time, becoming the first Sixers player to score 50 in back-to-back games and the first Philadelphia player to accomplish the feat since Wilt Chamberlain for the Warriors in 1962.

The last NBA player to score 50 points in consecutive games was Antawn Jamison in December 2000 with the Golden State Warriors. Iverson joined Rick Barry, Elgin Baylor, Chamberlain, Bernard King, Michael Jordan and Jamison as the only players to accomplish the feat.

In Chicago, Ben Gordon scored 23 points with Michael Jordan in attendance, and Chicago beat Portland, 92-87, for its fourth consecutive victory.

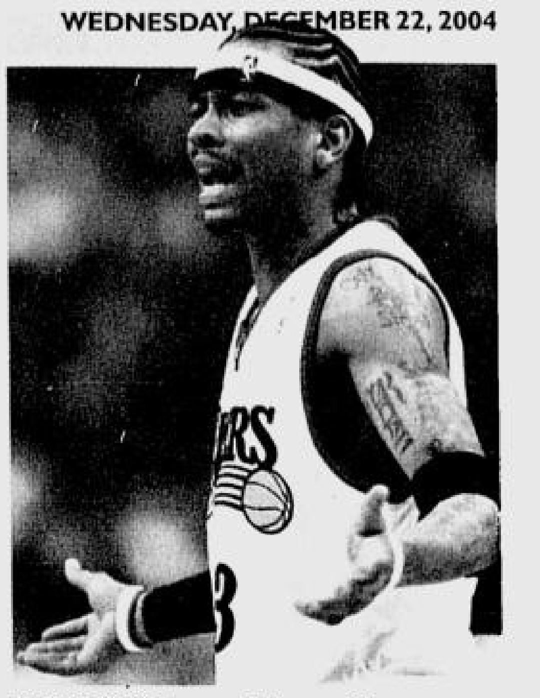
Eddy Curry added 18 points and Kirk Hinrich 17 for Chicago, which has won four straight for the first time since Jordan's 1998 championship team won 13 in a row. The Bulls are 8-6 since their 0-9 start.

His Airness received a loud standing ovation when he appeared on the jumbotron before the start of the fourth quarter, and the Bulls used the energy to their edge.

In Houston, Yao Ming scored a season-high 40 points and Tracy McGrady added 34 points and 12 rebounds, leading Houston over Toronto, 114-102.

In Denver, Quentin Richardson tipped in a shot at the buzzer to help Phoenix extend its winning streak to nine games with a 107-105 victory over Denver.

In other games, Washington edged Golden State, 103-101, while Memphis ambushed the Los Angeles Lakers, 82-72. *AP*



IVERSON: Not enough to save Sixers. AP

Shaq warns Kobe: Keep out of lane

MIAMI—Shaquille O'Neal has some advice for former teammate Kobe Bryant when the rivals play against each other for the first time—stay out of the lane.

"If you've got a Corvette that runs into a brick wall, you know what's gonna happen," he said. "He's a corvette. I'm a brick wall. So you know what's gonna happen."

O'Neal and his new team, the Miami Heat, play Bryant and the Lakers on Saturday in Los Angeles. The two feuded for most of his time there. O'Neal asked to be traded to Miami in the offseason after the Lakers lost to Detroit in the NBA Finals.

"A lot of people think you have to have a relationship to play together and win championships," O'Neal said. "That's not true at all and it was evident. But you have to have respect."

"Were we ever close? Not really. Did I respect his game? Of course I did."

Bryant said last week that he couldn't reach O'Neal to talk to him before the trade because he didn't have his phone number. O'Neal said he had no reaction to that.

"Because I know how he really is. I've been trying to say that for eight years. But you have to look at the individuals and see what type of people that they are." *AP*

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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Intramuros, Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
(Re-Bidding)

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) invites all interested bidders to participate in the re-bidding for the "JANITORIAL SERVICES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT CENTRAL OFFICE FOR CY 2005" with an approved budget for the contract of P4,071,874.47 Pesos.

Interested bidders must register and submit registration requirements to the Property Division, Administrative Service, 2nd Floor, DOLE Building, Muralla Street, Intramuros, Manila starting December 23, 2004. The checklist of requirements for registration shall be secured from the same office Deadline for registration is on January 5, 2005.

Only bidders duly registered with the DOLE may be allowed to participate in the competitive bidding activities, to wit:

ACTIVITY	DATE	TIME	VENUE
Pre-Bid Conference	January 6, 2005	1:30 p.m	Conference Room, 2nd Floor, DOLE Executive Building, San Jose Street, Intramuros, Manila
Submission of Eligibility Requirements	January 19, 2005	Between 1:00 p.m -2:00 p.m	-- same --
Submission of Bids	January 28, 2005	Between 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m	-- same --

Eligibility requirements shall be distributed during the Pre-Bid Conference or they can be secured on January 6, 2005 at the Property Division, Administrative Service, 2nd Floor DOLE Bldg., Intramuros, Manila

Eligible Bidders are also enjoined to inspect the DOLE premises prior to the conduct of the Pre-bid Conference in coordination with the General Services Division, Administrative Service

Eligibility documents shall be submitted to the DOLE Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) in a sealed envelope marked with "RE-BIDDING OF JANITORIAL SERVICES FOR CY 2005" and the name of the bidder in capital letters addressed to the undersigned on the date and time specified. Registered bidders are invited to witness the eligibility check on the said date at exactly 2:00 p.m. at the same venue.

Interested Bidders are requested to present their proposals, personally or through their authorized representatives, on the date of the re-bidding. The DOLE reserves the right to reject any or all bids, without offering any reason, waive any informality therein and make an award to the bidder whose bid is most advantageous to the Department. The DOLE assumes no obligation for whatever losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

For further inquiries/information, please get in touch with Ms. Lily Pearl L. Guerrero and Ms. Liberty C. Angeles, members of the BAC Secretariat at telephone numbers 527-3480 and 527-3583

(Sgd.) Atty. BENEDICTO ERNESTO R. BITONIO JR.
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee and
Assistant Secretary

(PDI-Dec. 22, 2004)

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AISHITE IMASU
james blanco
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DEC. 24 - 29

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DEC. 26 & 27

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(In front of ALIW Theater)
DEC 26, 27 & 28

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Torre, Paragua eye world chess seats

TORRE: Bound for India

ASIA'S First Grandmaster Eugene Torre and GM-candidate Mark Paragua will compete in the Asian Continental Individual Chess Championship from Jan. 14 to 23 next year at the Hotel Riviera Suites in Kerala, India.

The Fide 11-round Swiss system tournament offers 13 slots for the World Chess Championships where Torre and Paragua are hoping to earn return tickets.

Torre and Paragua narrowly missed qualifying in the last edition of the Asian Continental, dropping their final round assignments against FM Hameed Mansour Ali Kadhi of Yemen and GM Surya Sekhar Ganguly of India, respectively. Those setbacks yanked them out of the top 10 who all advanced to the world championships.

The 20-year-old Paragua eventually managed to qualify through the 2004 World Chess Championships in Tripoli, Libya, after finishing second to compatriot Ronald Dableo in the Asian 3.2a zonal eliminations in Vung Tau, Vietnam.

Paragua and Dableo, however, bowed in the first round to Super GMs Victor Bologan and Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu, respectively.

Having gotten more experience and gaining Elo rating with impressive stints in several international tournaments, including a second place effort in the recent Singapore Masters, Paragua is confident of qualifying again and improving on his world championship performance.

The 52-year-old Torre, on the other hand, has manned the top board for Team Philippines in the last 18 Chess Olympiads. He distinguished himself by reaching the candidates stage of the 1984 world championship, yielding to Hungarian GM Zoltan Ribli in their 1983 quarterfinals duel.

Torre and Paragua, along with GM Joey Antonio and IM Jayson Gonzales, powered the Philippines to 17th place in the 2004 Calvia Olympiad. *NM Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

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MON-FRI 9:30 pm

BIG NEWS

with Chen Mercado-Santos and Amelyn Veloso

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Wednesday, December 22, 2004

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No. 1	Sandara's Romance	Get Backers	Ragnarok	Masked Rider Ryuki	TV Patrol	Spirits	Krystala	Lovers In Paris	Hiram	Star Circle Nat Teen Quest	Yes Yes Show			Insider	Special Assignment
NBN	Value Vision	Value Vision		Value Vision	Teledyaryo	Value Vision		Talk Ko To		Linya		Teledyaryo		Mosconi Cup 2003				MMDA On The Road	
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	PBA Game-Bol	PBA				Sentro	PBA					Big News	Look Who's Talking		Philippine Badminton Tournaments	Billboard On-Air
GMA 7	Leya (2.45 PM)	Joyride (3.15 PM)	Snow Angel (3.45 PM)		One Piece	Witch Hunter Robin	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin	Starstruck (8.45 PM)	Forever In My Heart (9.15 PM)		Nuts Entertainment			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	Scrubs	Everwood		Ally McBeal		For Love Or Money		Newswatch Now	Cargo For Truth		Religious Filler
IBC 13		V League				IBC Express Balita		Home Shopping Network		Home Shopping Network		Linawin Natin		D E N R		Retro TV	IBC News Tonite	Breaking Barriers	
Solar		Wwe Heat		WWE Confidential		Streetfighter	Static Shock	Godzilla	Incredible Hulk	Invisible Man		Wwe Raw				Wwe Heat		WWE Confidential	
Nickelodeon	Dora, The Explorer	Little Bear	Blues Clues	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Brother's Garcia	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	All That	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	Rocket Power	The Wild Thornberrys	The Brother's Garcia
MYX		Urban MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Live!		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Knock First	JKX	The Today Show		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News	Entertainment Tonight	Will & Grace	Good Morning Miami	2004 American Music Awards Part 1		Meet My Folks		Tonight Show With Jay Leno		Blind Date	Fifth Wheel
Cinema One		Sumigaw Ka Hanggang Gusto Mo				Kung Mawawala Ka Pa				Cuore Ep.3			Persona	Muling Umawit Ang Puso (9.15 PM)				Kung Ako Na Lang Sana	
Studio 23	Bewitched	Urban MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	Batman Animated Series	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Wazzup Wazzup	Mr Bean	C.S.I.		The Amazing Race 6		News Central	The Oprah Winfrey Show		The Good Life With Cory Quirino
AXN		Fear Factor		Alias		Ripley's Believe It or Not		Gensomaden Saiyuki	Gensomaden Saiyuki	Boomtown		The Amazing Race		CSI: Miami		Fear Factor		Alias	
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	Ed		Philly		Third Watch		Friends	Ed
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	Main Sail	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic	On Assignment	Passport	Sunset Boulevard Of Dreams	Taboo		Extreme Latitude	Young Global Hot Shots	The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles Dr Brady Barr	Wild		About Asia		Nat Geographic Specials		Passport		Taboo	
Solar Sports		ATP Stockholm Open '04 SF2				Danish Open '04 Sfinal MD/WD/WS					FIVB Beach Tour Rio de Janeiro M/F		NBA TV Daily	NBA Dallas vs. New York					NBA TV Daily
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Wolfgang Puck's	E! Entertainment Special		E-News Weekend		Nigella Christmas Bites		Luxury Adventures	Planet Parent	Good Eats
HBO				Detective School Drop-Out			Cybernutt (5.45 PM)			The Duck And The Dad				Austin Powers In Gold Member			Final Destination 2		
Star Movies			Emmett's Mark (3.45 PM)				Loser			The Real McCoy (7.15 PM)				The Replacement Killers			Saving Jessica Lynch		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Richie Rich	Baby Looney Tunes	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Police Academy	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Teen Titans	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Gundam Seed	The Looney Tunes Show		Courage The Cowardly Dog	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Addams Family	The Funky Phantom	Boomerang - Boomeraction	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN	Motorsport Asia	2004-05 Big 10 Conf. Basketball- Texas Tech vs Iowa				Winter X Games VIII Slammed CO USA	2004 acc/Big 10 Chal. Ohio Ste vs Clemson				Goals!	Sportscenter Taiwan	World Pool League 04 Warsaw, Poland		2004 Women's Trips. Shot Magic CT USA2004 World Summit of Pool NY, NY USA		Sportscenter Taiwan		
Disney Channel	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Lizzie Mcguire	Even Stevens	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	The Legend Of Tarzan	Lilo & Stitch/Untalkative Bunny	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax	City By The Sea (2.45 PM)				The Flash			Anna's Dream			American Crime			The Cat's Meow				Black Hawk Down (10.55PM)	
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	Cactus Kid				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Mysterious Ways		Changi		Cavedweller			Strong Medicine (10.35PM)		Mysterious Ways
Discovery Channel		Science Mysteries		Science Frontiers		Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Virtual History				Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Hour Asia	
MTV Philippines		MTV Diyes		Non-Stop Hits		Non-Stop Hits	05 MAA Nominee Specials	MTV Get Spotted	MTV Loveline	MTV Supahstar		MTV Rock'd	Whatever Things	TRL		Room Raiders	One Bad Trip	VH1 Hits/ Video Collection	
Sports Plus	Superbowl2 Green Bay vs Oakland			Wendy's 3-Tour Chall. Day2				Get A Grip	Pac10 College Arizona at USC					Golf Academy 2002	Slipstream		NFL		
EWTN	Council Of Faith	Angelus (3.15 PM)	Refurbishing The Soul	The Donut Man	Faith Factory	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Saints For The Third Millenium	The Virtues	EWTN Gallery	Mother Angelica Live Classics		One In Their Hearts	Pope Pius XII	Daily Mass		Angelus (10.15PM)	St. Catherine Of Sienna	Our Father's Plan	

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1989 series of 2004

Only Cesar showed up in Lucena

Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—The members of the city council lambasted the organizers of the Metro Manila Film Festival-Philippines for the absence of popular movie stars in the much-awaited "parade of stars" that was held here last Saturday.

Councilor Dada Cabana said film festival officials should explain and publicly apologize for the no-show.

She said the city government had spent considerable time and effort to promote the event through the print and broadcast media.

"All the people, most of them even coming from neighboring towns, lined up early along the route of the parade expecting to see their favorite movie stars," she said in a privilege speech before the city council last Monday.

"But to their dismay, only one major star showed up," she added.

Actor Cesar Montano, who is also producer and director of the Visayan movie "Panaghoy sa Suba," one of the eight festival entries, was the only big star who showed up for the parade.

Montano came with lesser known actors and actresses who failed to excite the throngs of local residents who waited along the parade route.

Tax incentives

Cabana pointed out that the support of the city council in the promotion of the event transcended the bitter political division among local legislators.

She said the fractious council members have agreed to grant the film festival entries at least 60 percent tax incentives as an expression of support.

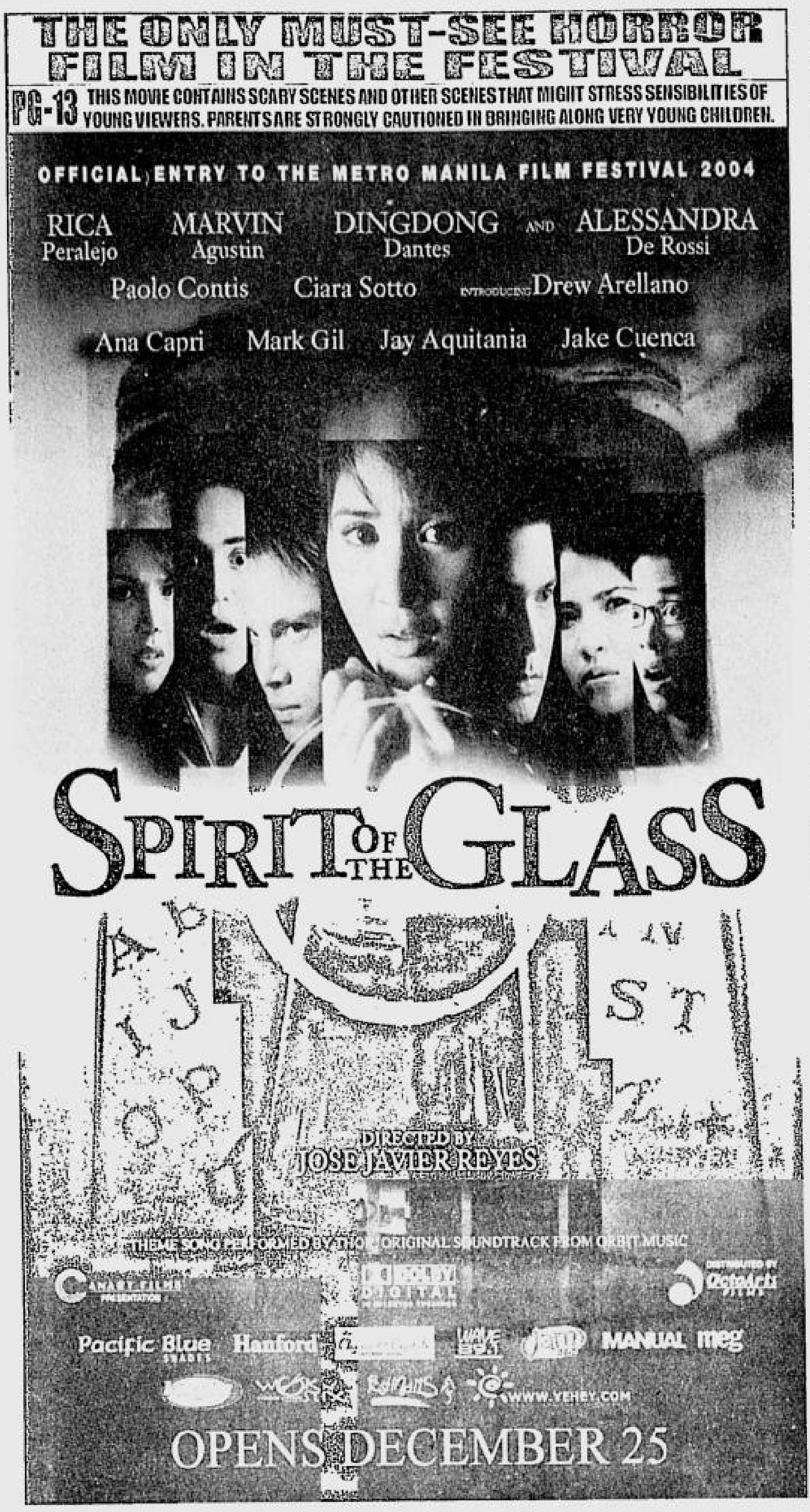
She said Lucena City Mayor Ramon Talaga Jr. and organizers of the film festival have entered into a memorandum of agreement saying each of the eight festival entries would have at least one major star riding the float prepared for the parade of stars.

The city council, along with SM Foundation, prepared eight floats fully decked with floral arrangements. But only five of the floats carried the group of movie stars led by Montano.

The remaining three floats carried members of the local media and city hall employees.

"It is clear that the MMFF organizers failed to do their part of the contract, which caused embarrassment on the part of the city government," Cabana said.

Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando is also chair of the film festival executive committee this year.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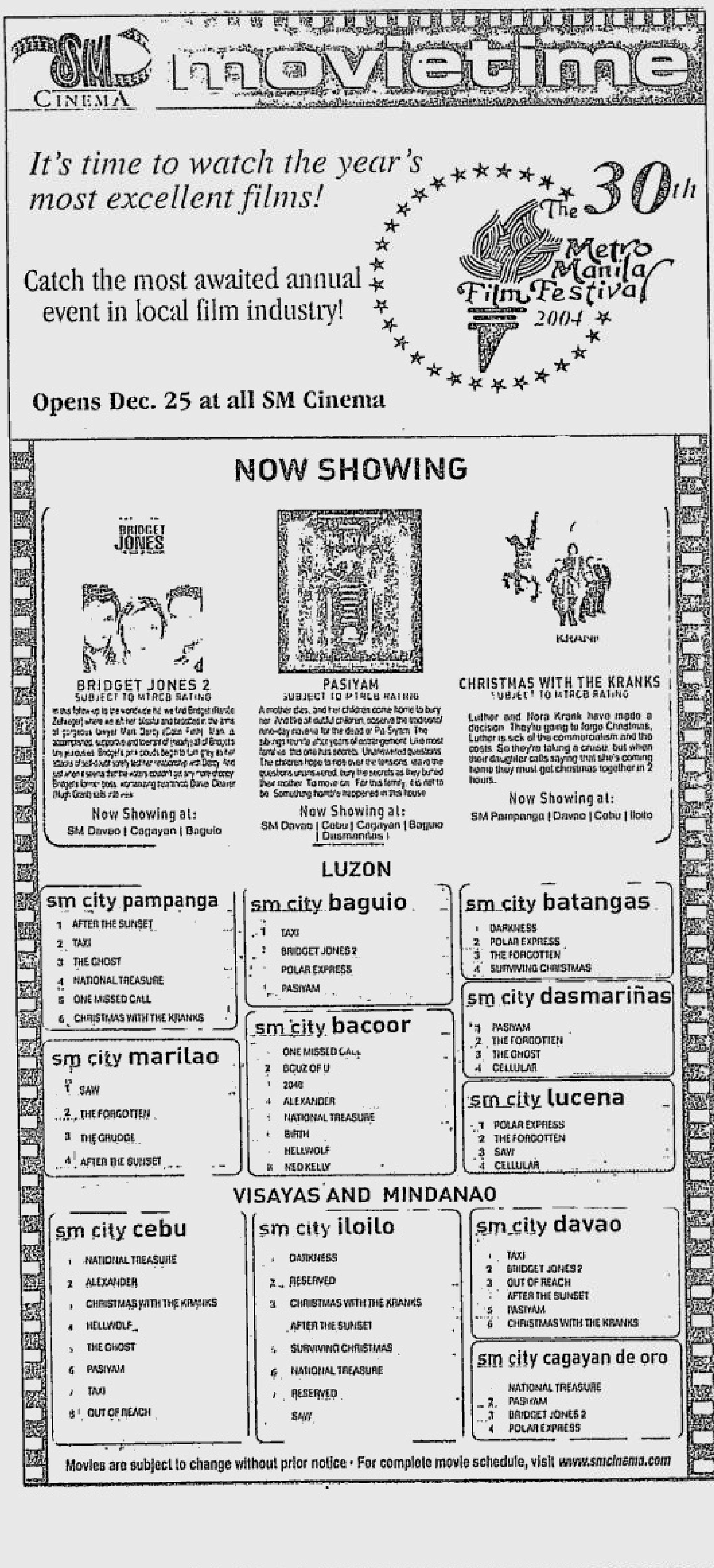

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4 NATIONAL TREASURE
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3 POLAR EXPRESS
4 PASIYAM

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3 THE FORGOTTEN
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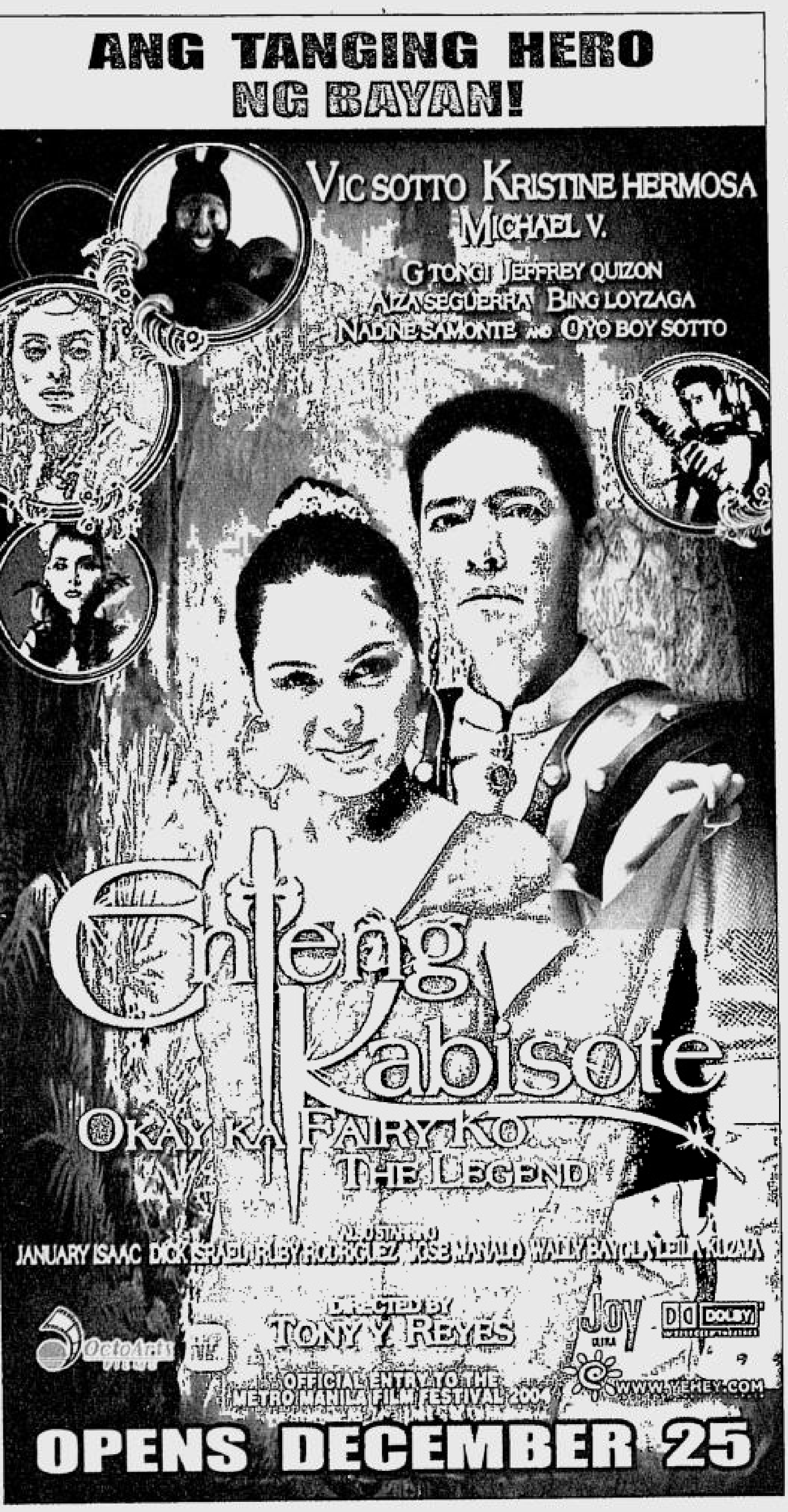
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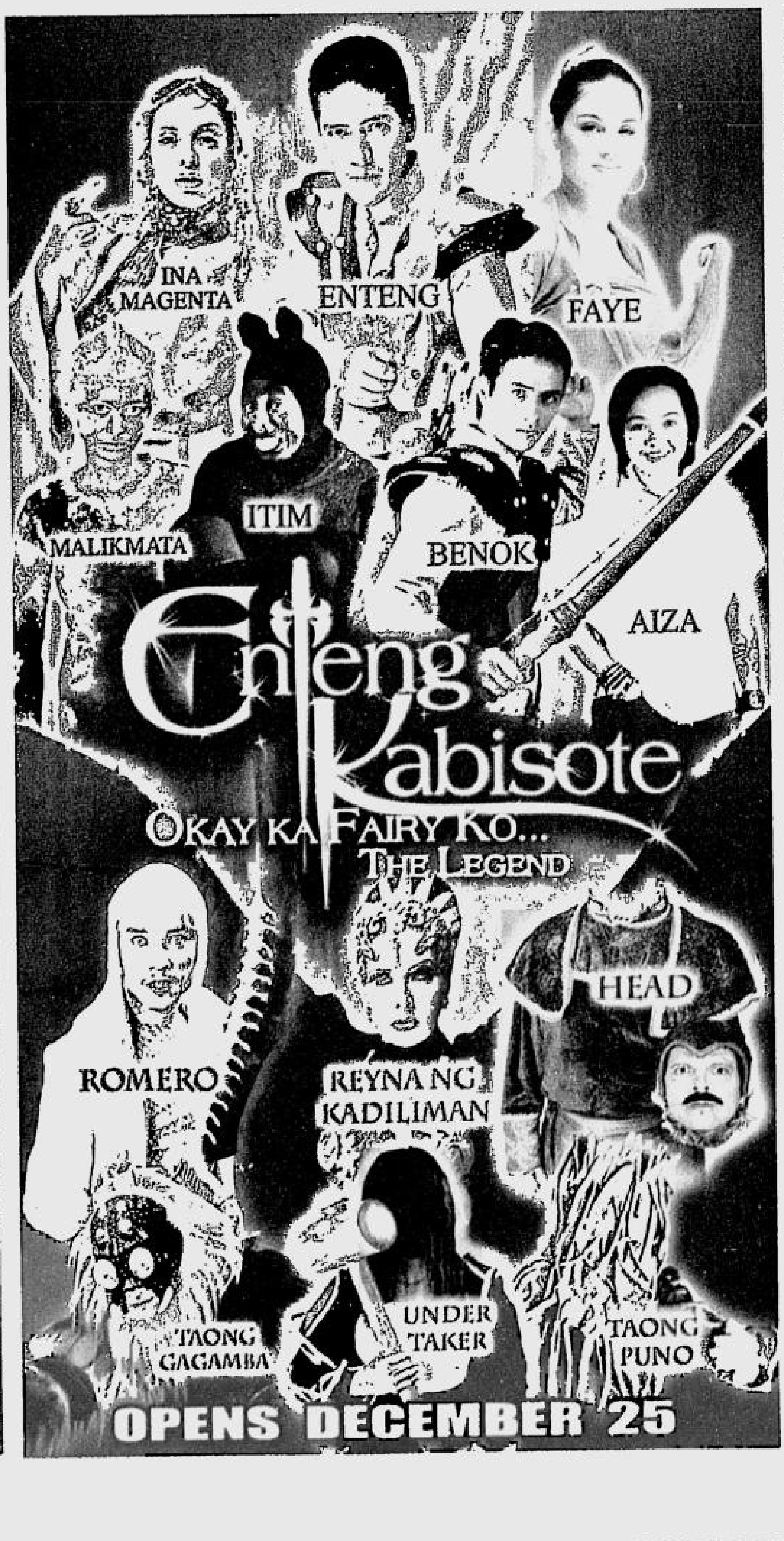
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TAONG GAGAMBA
UNDER TAKER
TAONG PUNO
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GMA Network's ex-publicity manager charged with perjury

THE MAKATI City Prosecutor's Office filed a criminal case of perjury against former GMA Network Entertainment TV publicity manager Ma. Theresa "Tet" Defensor for making allegedly false and malicious statements against GMA senior vice president for Entertainment TV Wilma Galvante.

Galvante's complaint of perjury stemmed from the libel charge filed by actress Kris Aquino against GMA Network top executives and Defensor.

In her sworn statement to answer Aquino's libel charge, Defensor said the column feed that Aquino called libelous had come from both Galvante and GMA Corporate Communications OIC Butch Raquel.

Galvante said Defensor's statement was false and malicious because Galvante had no knowledge at all of the column feed nor had she seen it at any time before or after Defensor e-mailed it to newspaper columnists.

Galvante pointed out that she was out of the country at the time the e-mail was sent.

Second Assistant City Prosecutor Henry M. Salazar, who investigated the case, found as fact that Galvante was indeed in the United States and Canada when Defensor claimed the column feed was given to her on June 2 and that Galvante was in China from July 10 to 13 when Defensor claimed her superiors had pressured her into signing a statement dated July 12 owning responsibility for the column feed and its publication.

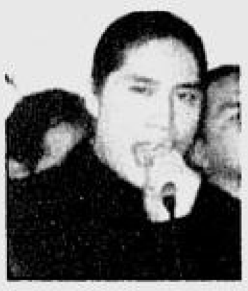
Salazar concluded that Defensor made false assertions in her counter-affidavit to Aquino's libel charge, and that the assertions were "willful and deliberate to avoid and shift criminal responsibility."

GMA Network counsel Gener E. Asuncion of Belo Gozon Elma Parel Asuncion and Lucila Law Office said that the ruling of the prosecutor destroyed Defensor's claim that GMA Network executive management was the source of the controversial column feed and that she was a mere instrument in disseminating it to the media.

GMA 7 dismissed Defensor for sending the e-mail and for acts of dishonesty, which it said placed the company and its officers in bad light and embarrassment.

"EARTHSEA," with Isabella Rossellini playing a high priestess who has custody of an amulet of peace that has insured harmony between humans and dragons for centuries.

'Miss Saigon' performer at Beck's Bar



DEX DE ROSA

JUST when you thought Malate had very few surprises left in terms of nightlife entertainment, Beck's Bar at the Grand Boulevard Hotel unleashes its best-kept secret: Filipino-Australian Dex de Rosa, who belts out tunes that make one's heart go all a-flutter.

Dex, fresh from a two-year stint in London's West End as a member of the cast of "Miss Saigon," performs every Friday of December at Beck's.

Dex's repertoire consists of classics by Sinatra, Dean Martin, Harry Connick Jr. and their ilk, as well as Tagalog songs, all rearranged to sound fresher and hipper.

His shows start at 8:30 p.m. No cover or minimum charge.

Hallmark offers innovative lineup of films and shows

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE HALLMARK Channel's innovative lineup of films and TV series for 2005 leads off with the groundbreaking television venture, "Child of Our Time," which airs in January.

The family "infotainment" program catalogues a new British generation as they develop into adulthood. The experiment involves 25 different families, and follows the children over a 25-year period. It aims to uncover the truth behind theories on child growth and development, like the impact of playing music or talking to a baby in the womb, and how much human personality is inherited.

The series also examines key influences in society and the way genes work in a particular environment, to provide a clearer answer to the question, "nature or nurture?"

Fascinating. Let's make it a point to follow the series when it starts screening on Hallmark.

February brings "I Do (But I Don't)," a romantic comedy about falling in love, falling apart and giving love another chance. March offers two engaging tales that span the ages—"Hans Christian Andersen: The Fairyteller" and "The Lives of Saints."

April ushers in the superb TV adaptation of the award-winning "Earthsea," with **Isabella Rossellini** playing a high priestess who has custody of an amulet of peace that has insured harmony between humans and dragons for centuries. But the amulet is broken in two and peace is in peril, until a boy uses his magical powers against Earthsea's enemies.

May's Mother's Day Special, "Black Water Lightship," is about a man dying of AIDS who asks a sister to sift through some painful memories. The process is daunting, but the secrets unearthed have a liberating effect on their family.

June brings the Father's Day title, "Fielder's Choice," about a career-obsessed executive who is suddenly tasked to be the surrogate dad of his autistic nephew.

These and other treats were previewed recently in Manila, when **Simon Lai**, Hallmark's VP for Sales and Business Development, Asia Pacific, met with media people to appraise them of the channel's plans for the coming year.

With Simon at the helm, Hallmark has experienced speedy distribution growth in Asia, and is now being seen in more than 20 countries in the region.

Other viewing highlights on the channel early next year:

"Five Days to Midnight"—a mild-mannered professor desperately tries to foil the prophecy of his own murder.

"Plainsong." A Hallmark Hall of Fame presentation, this film focuses on a prairie community and reinforces the importance of friendship and family.

"Just Cause." Two lawyers face enormous odds to take on cases no one else will touch.

"Strong Medicine." Women doctors confront a wide range of medical and emotional problems.

"Just Desserts." In this delectable story of love and confection, two warring pastry chefs discover a common passion—and the perfect recipe for romance and success.

"The Trail to Hope Rose." In this Western, honor and revenge come hard for a former outlaw making amends with the past. With **Ernest Borgnine, Lou Diamond Phillips** and **Lee Majors.**

"Vinegar Hill." A haunting film about the lies that bind and destroy the family, and the salvation that can only come from the truth. Starring **Betty Buckley** and **Tom Skerritt.**

We'll profile Hallmark's viewing treats for the second half of 2005 soonest.

Feedback

FROM **Jose Mari Meycauayan** of Binangonan, Rizal: "Congratulations for your numerous achievements. You column is inspiring and informative. Your constructive criticism is needed by our TV-film people. I am one of your many fans; I agree with your views and comments. You're a true and consistent person. Keep up the good work.

"For my part, I would like to commend these outstanding female and male TV personalities.

"Female: **Jessica Soho**—brave, flexible, a pioneer. **Love Añover**—funny, lovable, unique. **Mel Tiangco**—professional, competent. **Dina Bonnevie**—good actress, articulate. **Che Che Lazaro**—perfectionist, a leader, a winner in media. **Korina Sanchez**—achiever, complete media person.

"Male: **Vic Sotto**—natural host and comedian. **Julius Babao**—well-rounded person, confident. **Butch Francisco**—intelligent, good host and critic. **Paolo Bediones**—has appeal, charisma and X-factor. **Boy Abunda**—very good at his craft. **Ogie Alcasid** —strives hard at everything."

New films

PAUL Giamatti stars in "Sideways," a "small" film that could be making big noises in the Golden Globe and Oscar awards. Giamatti plays a divorced teacher and failed novelist. With his altar-bound friend, he goes on a wine-tasting trip, during which they ponder questions about their directions in life.

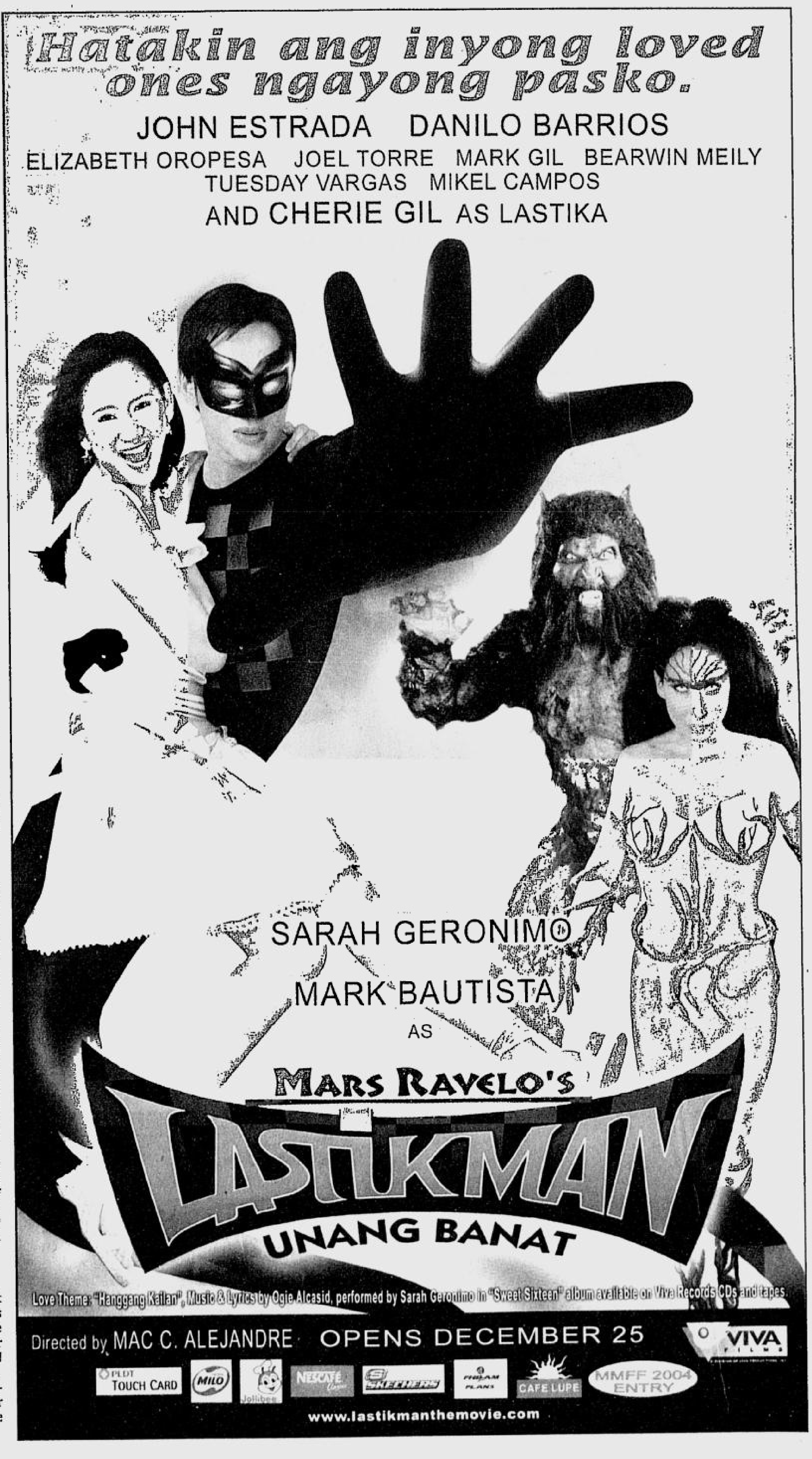
And **Cameron Diaz** topbills "In Her Shoes," where she plays an irresponsible fun-loving woman. Contrastingly, her older sister is a high-powered lawyer. When their attempt to live together fails miserably, they go off in different directions to find the missing pieces in their lives.

Programs include "Japan's War in Color," "Mysterious Hanging Coffins of China," "The Chief Who Talks with God," "The Will to Win," "White Tip's Journey," "Ultimate Explosions" and "Living with Tigers."

'The Contender'

REALITY TV guru **Mark Burnett** ("Survivor") has come up with his latest unscripted drama, "The Contender," featuring **Sylvester Stallone.** The series airs on AXN in January 2005.

"The Contender" offers a million-dollar prize and a chance for 16 aspiring boxers to become professional prizefighters.



Hatakin ang inyong loved ones ngayong pasko.
JOHN ESTRADA DANILO BARRIOS
ELIZABETH OROPESA JOEL TORRE MARK GIL BEARWIN MEILY
TUESDAY VARGAS MIKEL CAMPOS
AND CHERIE GIL AS LASTIKA
SARAH GERONIMO
MARK BAUTISTA
AS
MARS RAVELO'S
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Love Theme: "Hanggang Kailan", Music & Lyrics by Ogie Alcasid, performed by Sarah Geronimo in "Sweet Sixteen" album available on Viva Records CDs and tapes.
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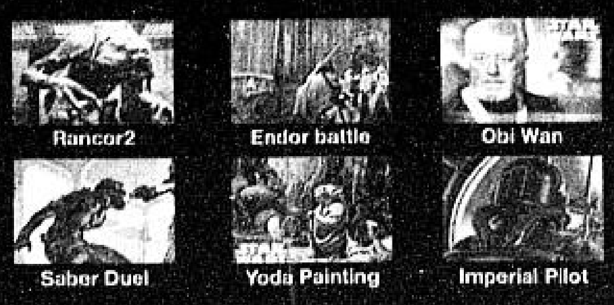
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Saber Duel
Yoda Painting
Imperial Pilot

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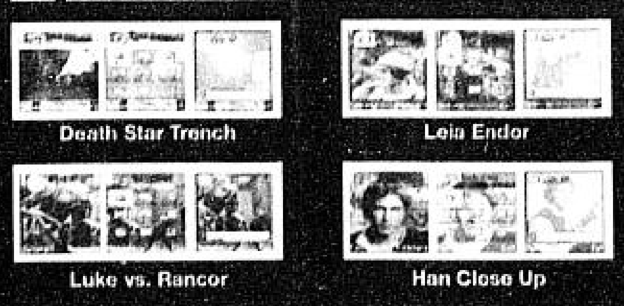
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Imperial March	N103	T103
Ben's Death	N104	T104
Cantina Band I	N105	T105
Cantina Band II	N106	T106
Carbon Freeze	N107	T107
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Kalinga natives mine memories of FPJ

By Desiree Caluza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

GENEROUS VISITOR. Fernando Poe Jr. is remembered fondly in the mining community
EDWIN BACASMAS

ITOGON, Benguet—"Gratefully yours, Fernando Poe Jr."

An undated photograph of the late actor Fernando Poe Jr. bearing this message was displayed in one of the oldest buildings of Benguet Corp. at the Balatoc mines here the death of the king of Philippine movies last week.

The photo, owned by Benguet Corp., was put on display to express the gratitude of residents to Poe who hired 250 migrant Kalingas from here to work as bit players in his movie "Ang Pagbabalik ng Probinsiyano" in 1997.

"Perhaps, [FPJ] is meeting my mother in heaven and they are having fun," said Ma. Theresa Pakipak, 39, a Kalinga native who grew up in the mining village and one of the bit players in the FPJ movie. Pakipak visited the building where Poe's photograph was displayed.

Her mother was Lourdes Pitag, a Kalinga elder who was FPJ's coordinator and consultant in the 1997 movie.

Mignon de Leon, vice president for administration of Benguet Corp.-Benguet district, said FPJ was well-loved by various tribal groups in the Balatoc mines because of his generosity.

"Unlike other [directors and producers] who shot their films here, FPJ was not demanding," said De Leon. "He knew how to repay a debt of gratitude."

Delio Pasion, tourism manager of Benguet Corp., said they never expected film outfits to consider shooting their movies in Balatoc.

Benguet Corp. opened the Balatoc mines tour in 1997, the first tourism venture of the mining company.

People's favorite

Pasion said other actors like Christopher de Leon, Robin Padilla, Sharon Cuneta, Maricel Soriano, Matt Ranillo III, Victor Neri, Lorna Tolentino, Cesar Montano and Rudy Fernandez have done movies in Balatoc.

"But FPJ remains the residents' favorite," Pasion said.

Pakipak said getting Kalinga natives to play bit roles in the movie was one of the reasons FPJ earned more votes than President Macapagal-Arroyo in Kalinga in the May 10 presidential election.

"When we learned that FPJ was going to campaign in Baguio, we went to the city immediately to be with him," Pakipak said.

"Ang Pagbabalik ng Probinsiyano" told the

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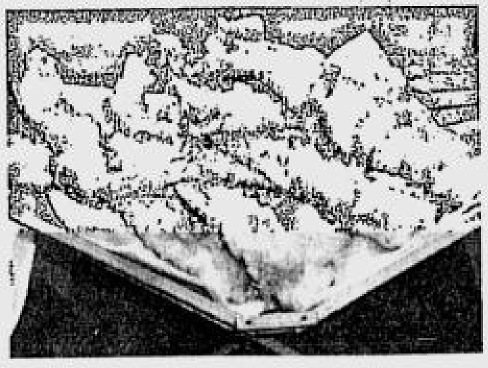

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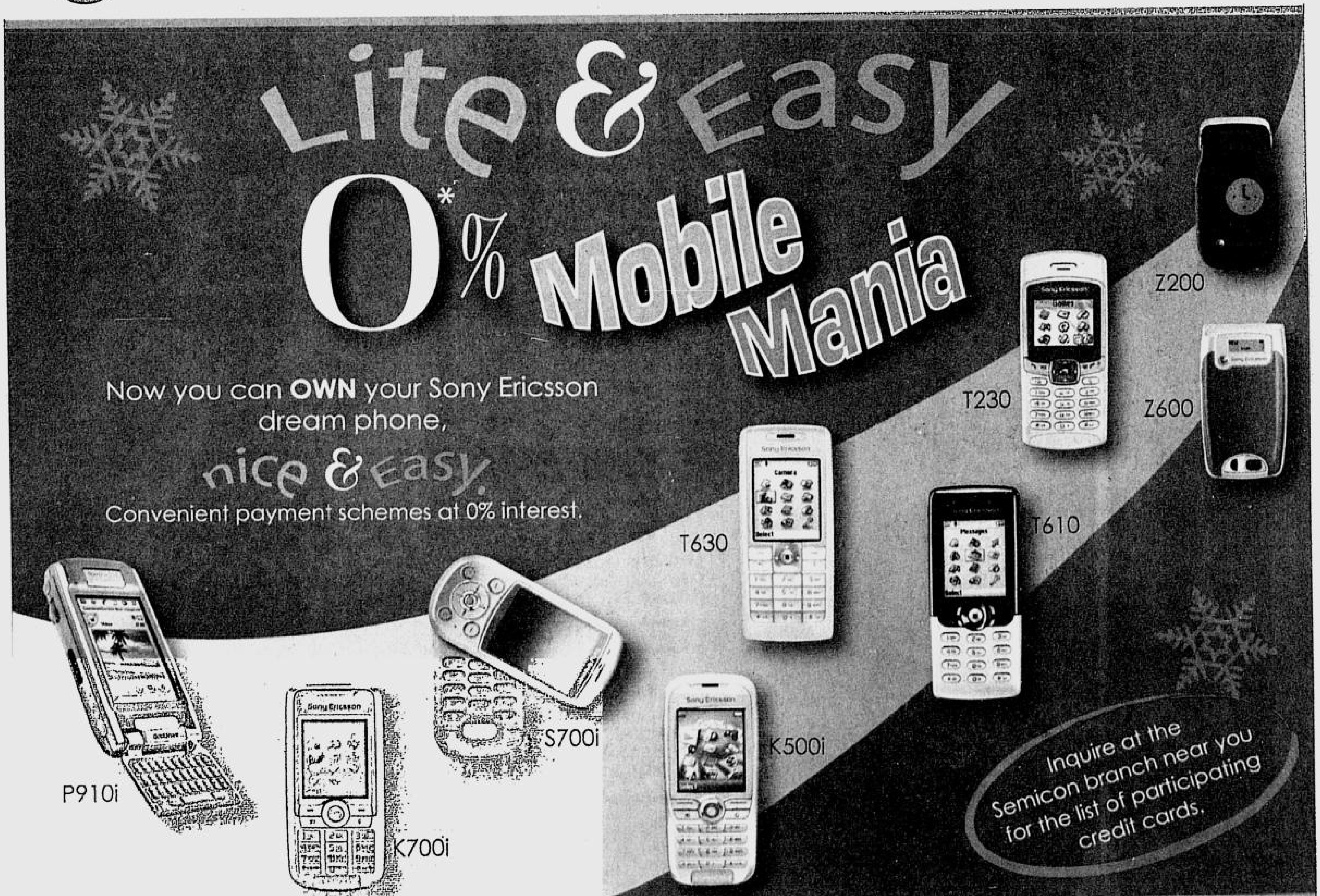

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Suburbia ends year with more shows

SUBURBIA Bar on M. Adriatico in Malate, Manila, rocks with year-end surprises and the prospects of a 2005 filled with more events, parties and gigs.

After R&B band South Border's back-to-back performance with K24/7 last Monday, and Sheryn Regis with Divo & Classified last night, Big Nite Out and Mocha with Spin Art perform tonight.

K24/7, together with Juice, keeps the place swinging tomorrow night, Dec. 23.

Suburbia takes a break on Dec. 24 and 25.

It opens its doors again on Sunday, Dec. 26, with Squib Cake.

Also performing are Chillworx with Classified on Dec. 27; Michael Cruz, Frenchie Dy and Escape on Dec. 28; Big Nite Out with Spice Band on Dec. 29; and Juice and Zyncxation on Dec. 30.

A special New Year's Eve countdown is slated on Dec. 31.

Suburbia Bar is on its fifth year of providing a venue for pulsating live music gigs, good food and cool drinks. The bar has established its name along with premier and sought-after bands in the country like Side A, Freestyle, South Border, all regular performers at Suburbia.

Suburbia Bar is now under new management, operated by XAX Music Entertainment led by its president, Paulo Kurosawa. XAX Music Entertainment is an independent recording label which released the original soundtrack albums of the "Endless Love" series, "Irene," "Love Letter" and "Loving You."

XAX is also behind the recent debut album of Faith (formerly known as Carmela Cuneta), and the solo album of Joseph Aldana "The Rockstar" (former vocalist of Rockstar 2).

Suburbia is open 6 p.m. to 5 a.m., Sunday to Saturday, with a minimum charge of P200++ (with 1 standard drink). Call 450-1685 to 86 for special events and other inquiries.

Countdown in Makati

THE MAKATI City government has invited Parokya ni Edgar, Bamboo, Kapatid, among others, to perform at the Makati New Year's Eve Countdown to be celebrated at the corner of Paseo de Roxas and Ayala Avenue.

Other performers who will take part in the show are Ella Mae Saison, Barbie's Cradle, Sandwich, Kitchie Nadal, Asin, Sponge Cola, Cambio, Itchyworms, Imago, Sugarfree, Orange & Lemon, Snafu Rigor & the AB '60s Band, and DJ Trish & Maxspeed.

Partygoers can also expect a fireworks show, especially prepared for the Makati event by the world's best pyrotechnics makers. This will be synchronized with a light and laser show and other special effects.

Makati has also prepared games and will raffle off prizes while magicians, jugglers, fire eaters, clowns and acrobats give away party items.

"We would like to make this special event a tradition to be celebrated annually," says Mayor Jejomar Binay.

Hosted by television hosts Toni Gonzaga and Ryan Agoncillo, the event starts at 5 p.m. and last until 12:30 a.m. the next day.

The Makati New Year's Eve Countdown is presented by Makati Mayor Jejomar C. Binay, the City Government of Makati, and Smart Communications, with Ayala Land, the Makati Commercial Estates Association, and the Ayala Center.

SeeMall!

AYALA CINEMAS THX

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1 BAD SANTA	1 GEORGE & THE DRAGON	1 BIRTH	5 THE POLAR EXPRESS	GUARANTEED SEATS 1 BRIDGET JONES 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00, 11:20	1 CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS
2 BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON	2 PASIYAM	2 ALEXANDER	6 NATIONAL TREASURE	GUARANTEED SEATS 2 BAD SANTA 12:45, 2:50, 4:55, 7:00, 9:05, 11:10	2 PASIYAM
3 BIRTH	3 HAROLD & KUMAR	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 BRIDGET JONES: 1:10, 3:30, 5:50, 8:10, 10:30	7 BAD SANTA	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS 1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	3 OUT OF REACH
4 THE POLAR EXPRESS	4 HONEY	4 2046		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 BIRTH 1:05, 3:10, 5:15, 7:20, 9:25, 11:30	4 TAXI
5 NATIONAL TREASURE				GUARANTEED SEATS 5 NATIONAL TREASURE 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00, 11:30	5 HIGHWAYMEN

GB1 GREENBELT 1
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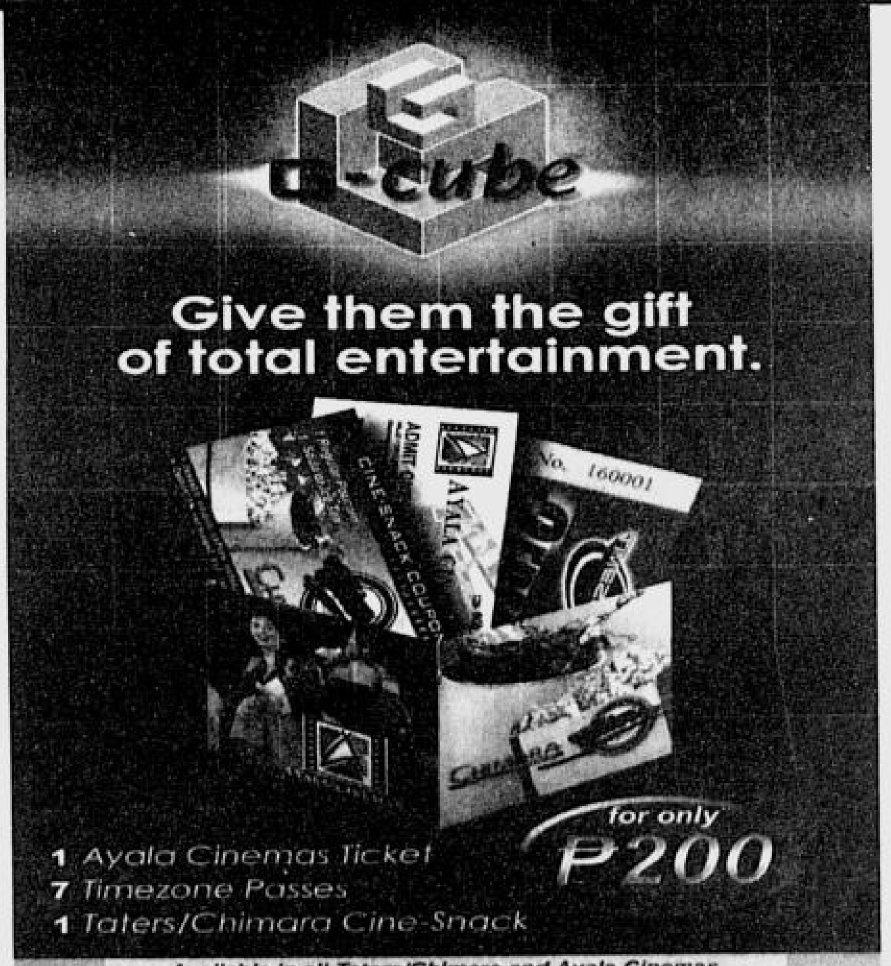

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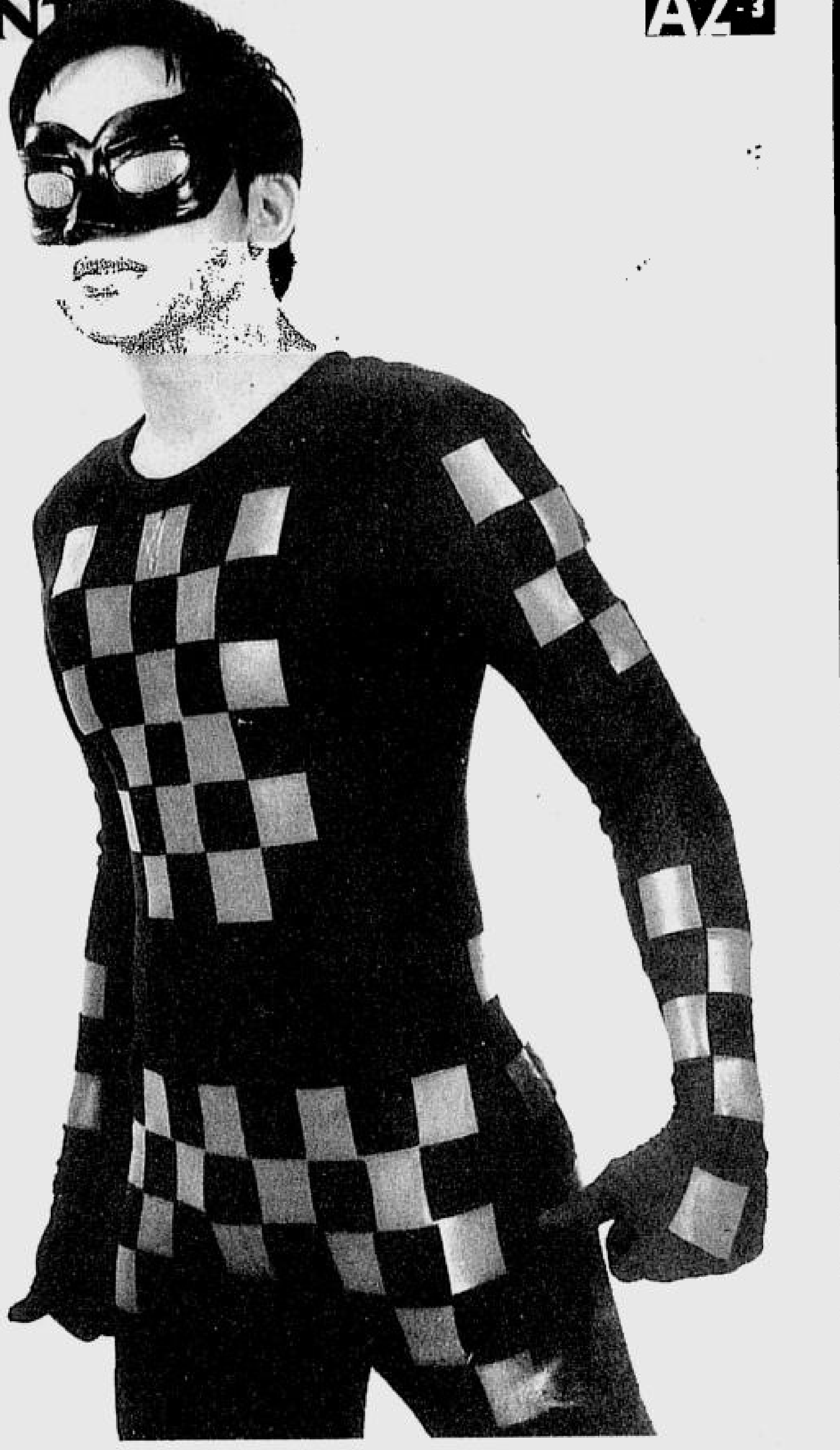
'Lastikman' young, hip, and different from 'Captain Barbell'



VIVA Films' "Captain Barbell," the top-grosser in last year's Metro Manila Film Festival (with now Sen. Bong Revilla in the title role), featured the biggest number of organically done special effects. Meaning, the effects were shot first and later enhanced in the laboratory.

This year, the Viva Films entry, "Lastikman," will go down in movie history as the action-romance-fantasy film with the biggest number of 3-D computer graphic effects, and they're calculated to thrill not only the kids but also the kids-at-heart.

Mark Bautista gets a big promotion to stardom reprising the role of a stretching superman first played years ago by the late Von Serna and recently by Vic Sotto. The movie is directed by Mac Alejandro who also megged "Captain Barbell."

Besides the eye-popping special effects, "Lastikman" features perhaps two of the country's most glamorous stars in the roles of villains, John Estrada and Cherie Gil, along with Danilo Barrios.

Direk Mac describes John's character, Taong-aso, as "very comfortable with his life as a villain," which can't be said about Danilo, who plays the son of the *taong-aso* and who hates being a villain but cannot do anything about it.

"The *taong-aso* (John) kills people, mostly women and children, and brings them home to Danilo," says Mac.

Cherie plays Lastika, initially more powerful than Lastikman who got his powers from the same tree which granted Lastika her own powers.

It's Mac's first time to direct Mark whom, he finds "naive and endearing, lovable like a typical *probinsiyano*. He's just right for the role of the boy who turns into Lastikman when the need arises. I did a workshop with Mark before the shooting and he was good."

Playing Mark's love interest is Sarah Geronimo, whom Mac first directed in "Captain Barbell." where Sarah played Bong's little sister.

"Sarah has improved a lot this year," says the director. "She should, because she had all of one year for a crash course in life."

Asked how different "Lastikman" is from "Captain Barbell," Mac says, "very different."

"'Lastikman' is very young and very hip, with young characters," he adds.

TOGETHER AT LAST, Judy Ann Santos and Raymart play man and wife whose marriage is shattered by the enemy's arrival

At long last love for Judy Ann, Raymart

SHOW TIME

JUDY ANN Santos and Raymart Santiago both became certified movie stars in the Nineties. She became the drama princess after the successful soap, "Mara Clara." He was launched in the action-drama movie "Noel Juico: Batang Kriminal."

Raymart and Judy Ann have had their share of hit movies and hit TV shows but, until now, they had never appeared in a teledrama or a movie together.

BASFilm is proud to offer the first-ever pairing of two of today's most popular young actors. Raymart and Judy Ann star as man and wife whose wedded bliss is shattered by the arrival of the Japanese in the small provincial town of San Nicolas.

A film about courage, love and sacrifice set during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, "Aishite Imasu (Mahal Kita) 1941" is written by Ricky Lee and directed by Joel Lamangan.

So why did it take a decade before Judy Ann and Raymart could do a movie together?

Judy Ann says it's not like they were avoiding each other all these years. "*Ako kasi, sa Regal at Star Cinema ako madalas gumawa ng* movie," explains Judy Ann. "*Sa* TV *naman*, exclusive *ako sa* ABS-CBN. *Si Raymart*, home movie studio *niya ang* Viva Films, *at* home network *niya ang GMA. Kaya mahirap talagang magsama kami sa* project."

Raymart echoes his radiant leading lady's sentiments. He says, "*Suwerte nga na* finally, *napagsama kami ni* Judy Ann *sa* movie. 'Aishite Imasu' is worth the wait *talaga*."

Direk Joel says his two leads worked wonderfully well together, despite gossip to the contrary. "Once the cameras started rolling, nothing could keep Judy Ann and Raymart apart, not even the thought of Claudine Barretto!"

He is referring to a rumor that Raymart's real-life girlfriend, Claudine, forbade him from getting too close to Judy Ann.

"If you don't believe me," adds Joel, "just look at Raymart and Judy Ann's love scenes. Those sequences are supposed to be very tender, but they sizzle onscreen. The honeymoon scene is very moving, especially when Raymart reassures Judy Ann that he won't hurt her because it's her first time to make love."

And was Claudine bothered by the love scene? Replies Raymart, "*Alam niya na trabaho lang yon. Alam kong gusto talagang gawan ng* issue *yung* love scenes *at* kissing scenes *namin ni* Judy Ann, *pero ginawa namin 'yon dahil kailangan ng kuwento, at para sa ikagaganda ng* movie."

"Aishite Imasu (Mahal Kita) 1941" is line-produced by Regal Entertainment for BASFilm Production. It also stars Jay Manalo, Jaclyn Jose, Angelu de Leon, Marco Alcaraz, Iya Villania, TJ Trinidad and Anita Linda.

The war drama introduces TV star Dennis Trillo, and is an official entry in the 2004 Metro Manila Film Festival Philippines, "Aishite Imasu 1941" invades cinemas starting Dec. 25.

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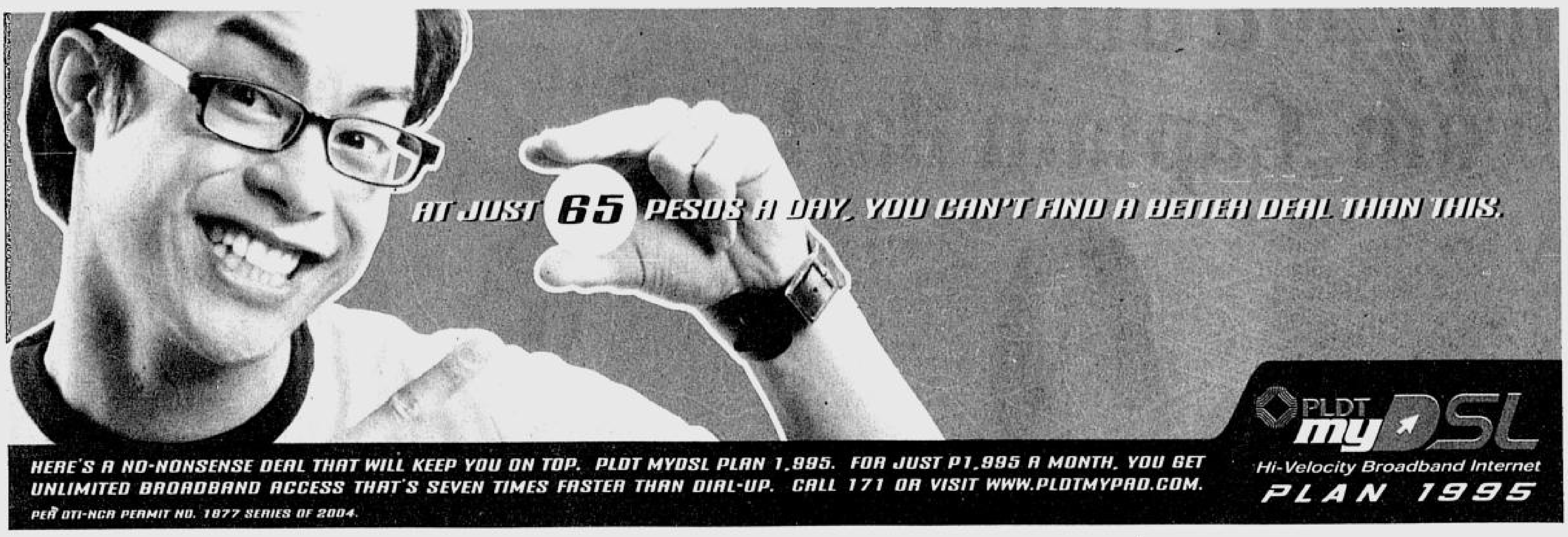
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Kalinga natives mine memories of FPJ

From page A2-1

story of the residents of a small town in Kalinga opposing the mining venture of a rich investor. The investor maintained a private army to threaten residents into giving their approval to the mining operations.

FPJ played the town's police chief who took up the cudgels for the residents.

Close to 'Da King'

Pakipak said her late mother was closely coordinating with FPJ who would often visit Balatoc to negotiate with Benguet Corp. officials for a location shoot.

"On the first day of shooting, we were all excited," she remembered. "We became close to him [FPJ].

"We talked to him, shook hands and joked with him. We bonded with Paquito Diaz, the usual bad guy in FPJ films, but he was a very nice person. Like FPJ, he was also very accommodating."

One of FPJ's trusted coordinators was another Kalinga they called Mr. Balangan.

For three months during the filming, the Kalingas were fed and paid well, Pakipak said.

"No one got hungry when FPJ was around," she said. "He would buy all the goods of the vendors and distribute them to the cast. He didn't want to see people suffering."

She said FPJ also went around the village to mingle with the residents.

QC cast party

In Keymen's Hill, a Balatoc community where families of miners from Kalinga, Mt. Province, Ilocos and Pangasinan live, FPJ talked to elders and even gave them money, she said.

Pakipak said FPJ consulted her mother about the parts of Kalinga culture they would include in the movie. FPJ also asked her mother's help in looking for authentic Kalinga materials like musical instruments and costumes that they could use in the movie.

After the shooting, FPJ asked the Kalingas to visit him in his studio in Metro Manila for a cast party. He paid for all their expenses, Pakipak added.

On Dec. 22, 1997, a busload of bit players was fetched from Balatoc to attend the party in the FPJ studio in Del Monte, Quezon City.

Pakipak said she was surprised when FPJ fumed when he saw that only one bus came, as he was expecting more people from Balatoc to attend the party.

"We could have taken three buses of people down to Metro Manila and each person would be given a sack of rice," Pakipak said. "Still, the cast enjoyed the party very much. They were treated to a shopping spree and were given gifts."

"DA KING" WAS HERE. The photo is on display at Benguet Corp. to commemorate FPJ's filming of "Ang Pagbabalik ng Probinsiyano" at the site in 1997, with locals as bit players

Two cats on life, love and country

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

REVIEW

FOR three hours last Nov. 15, Makati got a heady taste of what Quezon City had been enjoying all these years—stirring music about life, love and country.

The sound came courtesy of artists Joey Ayala and Noel Cabangon, who made their guitars gently weep and laugh together at Merk's Bar Bistro in a show, entitled "Two Cats on a Prowl."

They quickly left an indelible mark as soon as they opened their show with the soulful strains of "Ang Himig Natin", written by Jose "Pepe" Smith and first performed by the Juan de la Cruz Band. The lyrics were slightly changed and Cabangon ended up singing about a friend named Pilipinas. A friend, he said, full of hope and promise.

Ayala and Cabangon followed it up with another original Filipino classic from Asin. It didn't show—from the way their distinct guitar styles and tenor and baritone voices came together—that it was the first time for the two men to perform together. It was instant communication between kindred spirits.

Then Ayala left the stage alone to Cabangon, who wore a printed blue shirt and jeans. Cabangon sang his own compositions on issues that "nobody wanted to write about," including freedom, the plight of street children and the environment. He ended his long solo suite with "Kanlungan," the song he first performed when he was still with Buklod, which pulled him out of the "alternative" music scene and into the mainstream."

Stage presence

Cabangon's voice was so powerful that it seemed all 5-foot-3 of him was one giant, vibrating vocal chòrd. He sang from the heart and the passion was not lost on the many foreigners in the audience who sat in awe and clapped enthusiastically at the end of every song. They may not have understood the words, but they obviously felt them.

Then it was Ayala's turn to give Cabangon a break. It was apparent Ayala had a more commanding stage presence, not because he was a just shade below 6 feet with the build and the voice to go with the height. It was because he easily led the audience into fits of laughter with his self-deprecating humor.

He even poked fun at how he shared a name with the Makati financial and commercial district. No, he said, he was not a relation. Not even a distant one.

He guided the audience through his music, especially songs that students in the University of the Philippines in the 1980s and early 1990s thought singing them was enough to make patriots of themselves. These included "Panganay na Umaga," "Maglakad," "Agila," "Manong Pawikan," "Magkabilaan," his classic "Walang Hanggang Paalam," the love theme of many UP couples, and his lone radio hit, "Karaniwang Tao."

Homeward bound

It was just jamming from that point on, when Cabangon again joined Ayala and together they played hits from the 1970s. They said they drew up their repertoire based on the kind of audience they thought they would get.

They guessed right, for the crowd lustily sang along to James Taylors's "You've Got a Friend,", America's "Horse With No Name" and Kansas' "Dust in the Wind."

FROM THE HEART. Noel Cabangon and Joey Ayala perform at Merk's

They ended the show with Simon and Garfunkel's "Homeward Bound," which was what the audience was at past 1 a.m.

As expected, the audience was not as big as the crowds that would troop to the shows of new artists who have never written their own songs even if heir lives depended on it. But the ones that did watch the show on the last day of the Ramadan were the better for it, for they not only went home with the memory of two brilliant artists whose guitar skills and voices could give other artists a run for their money.

The night's crowd also went home with powerful words swirling in their heads—words that are original, meaningful and, most importantly, coming from the Filipino heart.

Harrison guitar from under his bed sells for $567,500

NEW YORK—A classic Gibson guitar used by George Harrison on the Beatles' "Revolver" album and by John Lennon on the "White Album" sold last week to an anonymous bidder for $567,500, Christie's auction house announced.

The cherry-red SG Standard guitar belonged to Harrison from 1966 through 1969. He used it in recording sessions and in several of the band's increasingly rare public appearances, and loaned it to Lennon during "White Album" sessions, according to Darren Julien, who cosponsored the auction.

Among other items purchased was a two-page letter sent by a hallucinating Kurt Cobain to Courtney Love. The 1991 letter was faxed to her from the Nirvana front man's Sheffield, England, hotel. It sold for $19,120.

A childhood book report by Britney Spears on the children's book "Raymond's Run" sold for $1,912. The report, which dates back to the 1980s, includes a message from her teacher: "Proofread/Messy."

Harrison presented the guitar to a friend, guitarist Pete Ham of the band Badfinger, as a gift in 1969. Ham committed suicide five years later, and the guitar passed on to his brother John.

John Ham stored the guitar beneath a bed in his London home, where it sat until he was contacted in 2002 by Rock and Roll Hall of Fame representatives putting together a Badfinger retrospective. *AP*

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2004

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Gov't moves to expropriate Naia-3

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE OFFICE of the Solicitor General yesterday filed with the Pasay City Regional Trial Court a case to expropriate the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 in a bid to have it working at the soonest time possible.

Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said that through expropriation, the government hoped to open the facility in early 2005 as well as break the impasse on the negotiations with the private contractor.

Purisima said the OSG filed the case in behalf of the Manila International Airport Authority, whose charter grants the MIAA board the power to expropriate real or personal property.

The Naia-3 started in 1994 as an unsolicited build-operate-transfer project undertaken by Asian Emerging Dragon Corp.

In July 1997, the concession agreement was awarded to Philippine International Air Terminals Co., which groups Pair Cargo, Philippine Air and Ground Services Inc. and the German firm Fraport AG.

The Supreme Court ruled in May 2003 that all five contracts related to the Terminal 3 project were void as they were contrary to public policy and violative of the Build-Operate-Transfer law.

"(The expropriation case) would let the government take over the facility and bid out its operations (to a third party)," Purisima said. "We cannot allow a vital infrastructure to rot and billions of pesos in investments to be rendered useless."

The official, who is also Malacañang's spokesperson on economic matters, said that expropriation of property deemed necessary for public interest was well within the right of any government.

"But one thing is very clear: (the administration) will pay fair and just compensation for the facility," Purisima said.

He added that while a Supreme Court ruling declared the contract of Piatco as void from the beginning, the court also said the firm should be compensated.

Purisima said that in fact, Malacañang has made available P3 billion as downpayment for the air terminal.

The official said that the expropriation plan worked under Rule 67 of the Rules of Court, which meant it was possible that Piatco would get a fair market value.

IDLE Naia-3 Terminal

"Under Section 4 of Rule 67, just compensation would be determined on the date of the taking of the property or the filing of the complaint, whichever came first. In some expropriation cases, the Supreme Court stated that the value of the property (in question) is market value," he said.

Ownership of Naia-3 is under arbitration with the International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes in Washington D.C. and with the International Chamber of Commerce in Singapore.

Industry sources said the arbitration cases could be resolved in 2006 or 2007 at best.

Fraport filed a $425-million recovery case before the ICSID while Piatco filed a similar claim of $500 million before the ICC.

In turn, the government filed a counter claim valued at $900 million before the ICC.

Gov't keeps budget gap within target

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL government's budget deficit reached P160.2 billion for the first 11 months of the year, a relatively low figure that prompted the Department of Finance to project that the full-year deficit figure will be better than programmed.

"It's a surprisingly good figure. My fearless forecast is that the (full-year) deficit will only be about P194 billion, compared with the target of P197.8 billion," Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong said in a briefing yesterday.

The P160.2-billion deficit for the January-to-November period was 7 percent lower than the P172.2 billion recorded during the same period last year. It also gives the national government a leeway to incur a budget deficit of P37.6 billion in December and still meet its 2004 target.

Documents from the DOF showed that the better-than-target budget deficit was due to the government's strong revenue-generation, which compensated the growth in expenditures during the period.

Total revenue in the 11-month period stood at P637.5 billion, or 11.9 percent higher than last year's. The Bureau of Internal Revenue accounted for P427.11 billion, although this was still short of its 11-month target by P5.7 billion.

The Bureau of Customs, the second biggest revenue earner after the BIR, collected P112.58 billion from January to November, already exceeding its full-year target of P112 billion.

The high revenue for the period offset the increase in government spending. Expenditures incurred by the national government during the 11-month period stood at P797.7 billion. In November alone, expenditure reached P73 billion, or 11.9 percent higher than a year ago.

Amatong said that while the government has a relatively big spending headroom for December, it would stick to its policy of austerity. She said that the government would continue to control spending as long as there is a budget deficit.

Remittances seen hitting $9B in 2005

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas expects dollar inflows from Overseas Filipino Workers to remain robust next year, rising by at least 5 percent to hit close to $9 billion.

BSP Deputy Director Amando Tetangco Jr. yesterday said that although OFW remittances this year came in stronger than expected, the BSP preferred to be conservative in its assumptions for 2005.

Tetangco said total OFW remittances this year would likely grow by 9.2 percent over last year to as much as $8.4 billion, beating BSP's target of 6 percent.

"If we end 2004 with $8.3 billion, this could rise to almost $9 billion next year," Tetangco said. "The trend is towards a continued 5-6 percent growth."

Dollars sent home by OFWs rose by 10.1 percent in October to $741 million from a year ago, fueled by funds earmarked for Christmas spending.

This brought OFW remittances in the first 10 months to $6.9 billion, 9.5 percent higher than the $6.3 percent chalked up in the same period last year.

The bulk of the funds came from the United States, Saudi Arabia, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom.

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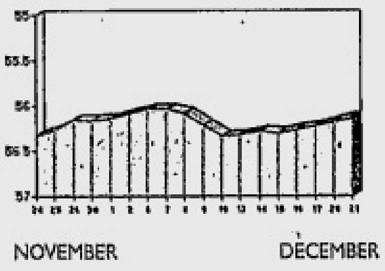

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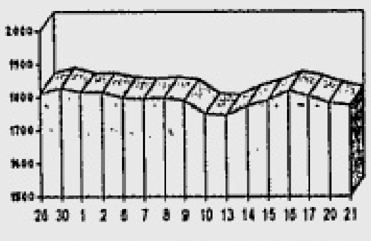
December 21, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.746213	1.000000	56.1840
Japan	Yen	0.007172	0.009611	0.5400
United Kingdom	Pound	1.452578	1.946600	109.3678
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.095897	0.128512	7.2203
Switzerland	Franc	0.650068	0.871156	48.9450
Canada	Dollar	0.608012	0.814797	45.7786
Singapore	Dollar	0.454759	0.609422	34.2398
Australia	Dollar	0.569367	0.763009	42.8689
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.979450	2.652661	149.0371
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.198985	0.266660	14.9820
Brunei	Dollar	0.453377	0.607570	34.1357
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000081	0.000108	0.0061
Thailand	Baht	0.019114	0.025615	1.4392
UAE	Dirham	0.203195	0.272301	15.2990
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.340100	75.2922
Argentina	Peso	0.251674	0.337268	18.9491
Brazil	Real	0.277919	0.372439	20.9251
Denmark	Kroner	0.134545	0.180304	10.1302
India	Rupee	0.017017	0.022805	1.2813
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.196398	0.263193	14.7872
Mexico	New Peso	0.066877	0.089622	5.0353
New Zealand	Dollar	0.534881	0.716794	40.2724
Norway	Kroner	0.121050	0.162219	9.1141
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012510	0.016764	0.9419
South Africa	Rand	0.130800	0.175285	9.8482
Korea	Won	0.000705	0.000945	0.0531
Sweden	Kroner	0.111797	0.149819	8.4174
Syria	Pound	0.014375	0.019264	1.0823
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023095	0.030950	1.7389
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000390	0.000522	0.0293

STOCK MARKET

Profit-taking continues

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARE prices closed 0.6 percent lower yesterday on continued profit-taking, dealers said.

They said the day's turnover was light compared to previous sessions, suggesting that most fund managers had already left the market ahead of the Christmas holidays.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 10.8 points to 1,775.45 after trading between 1,772.81 and 1,787.79.

Volume turnover totaled 615.8 million shares worth P584.27 million from 1.02 billion shares worth P689.86 million on Monday.

The broader all-shares index gained 1.33 points to 1,144.30. Losers beat gainers 38 to 33, with 41 stocks unchanged.

"Trading was very light, since almost everyone is out of the market ahead of the holidays," said Mark Alan Canizares of Citiseconline.com.

Given the sluggish trade, the market could go either way during the remaining trading days of 2004, he said.

"The possibility for a rally is still there, but it depends on who stays and trades," Canizares added.

BPI Securities Inc. said in an advisory that threats made by the al-Qaida terror network to disrupt oil supplies in the Middle East also weighed on sentiment.

"The market is also tentative, given the long holiday break ahead. Investors are most likely to stay sidelined until such time there (is) more positive news that would help build up confidence in the market," it said.

"The long weekend ahead has prompted investors to lighten their holdings. People are also just waiting to see what will happen tomorrow during FPJ's funeral," said BPI Securities senior manager Roberto Cano.

BPI Securities placed the market's support at 1,748 and resistance at 1,807.

Metro Pacific fell 5.7 percent to 33 centavos, still hurt by the holding company's confirmation Monday of an INQUIRER report that Metrobank obtained a court-approved foreclosure order on Metro Pacific's remaining 10-hectare property inside the Bonifacio Global City and 20 condominium units in the upscale Pacific Plaza Towers. *AFP, AP*

Euro-Med to pay out P220M in dividends

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

EURO-MED Laboratories Philippines, Inc., a listed maker of pharmaceutical products, has declared a stock payout worth P220 million, the firm yesterday said in a disclosure.

Euro-Med said the stock dividends represent 10 percent of its retained earnings as of end-December. The dividend payout has yet to be approved by stockholders when they meet next year.

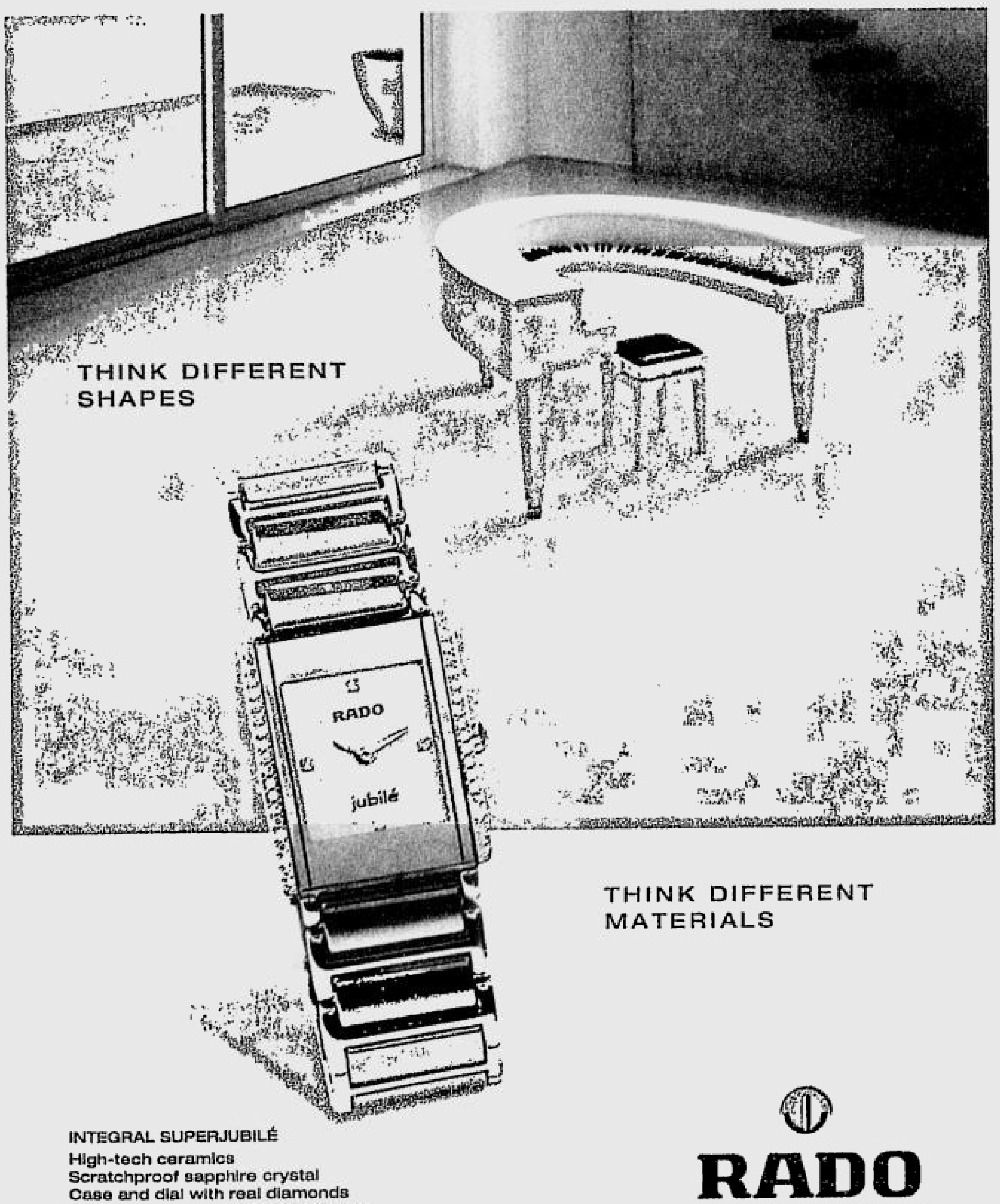
To facilitate the payout, the board of the manufacturing firm said it would issue 220 million shares with a par value of P1 per share from its unissued capital stock.

The stock dividend will be payable to stockholders after the necessary regulatory approvals have been secured.

Euro-Med is the leading manufacturer of high quality intravenous fluids in the Philippines. It is the first firm in the country to utilize the most modern European blow-fill-seal technology of aseptically producing sterile and pyrogen-free intravenous fluids in plastic containers.

INTEREST RATES

December 21, 2004- MART1 Rates Benchmark Interest Rates	MART 1 21-Dec-04	MART 1 20-Dec-04
1 Month	8.1911	8.2167
3 Months	8.41	8.4196
6 Months	9.2589	9.2433
1 Year	10.215	10.2286
2 Years	11.1867	11.17
3 Years	11.7125	11.7077
4 Years	12.3233	12.32
5 Years	12.7769	12.7867
7 Years	13.365	13.3933
10 Years	13.8167	13.8183
20 Years	13.9661	13.9679
25 Years	14.465	14.4767



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North Triangle mall dev't starts

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE PRIVATE consortium developing the mall linked to the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) station along North Edsa is scheduled to start the P5-billion project by the first half of next year, according to industry sources.

Sources told the INQUIRER that the consortium members of the North Triangle Depot Commercial Corp. (NTDCC) were trying to secure the funding needed to start the project.

About P2.5-P3 billion in bank loans would be required to partially fund the North Triangle Commercial Center at the MRT depot, with the balance to be covered by an equity infusion.

Construction of the 200,000-square meter mall linked to the MRT North Edsa station will start as soon as funding is secured, and will be completed by 2007.

The major groups behind the consortium are the Fil-Estate Group, which accounts for 30 percent of the consortium, and Ayala Land Inc., the Campos and Ramos groups, that have about 15-16 percent each.

In a related development, the Metro Rail Transit Corp., said it was optimistic it could finish the extension of the MRT III project by 2006 as soon as it secures a favorable opinion from the Department of Justice.

The DOJ issued an opinion last March, which said the MRT extension should be put up for public bidding since the agreement between MRTC and the Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC) for building this extension has lapsed.

MRTC asked the DOJ to reconsider its opinion.

Phase II of the MRT 3 project provides for a 5.1-kilometer transit system that will add three new stations to the line—Roosevelt, Balintawak and Monumento.

Once completed, ridership will increase to 1.3 million passengers a day from the current 400,000.

Phase II is seen to generate revenues of roughly $300 million by 2030 combined with Phase I, and cut government subsidies by $300 million or roughly P16.8 billion by the 12th year of operation.

Phase II will also provide residents of Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Bulacan access to the central business districts in Manila via Edsa.

Fil-Estate accounts for 29 percent of the MRT project, the 17-kilometer light rail system along Edsa.

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Notice to Insular Life Policyholders

Due to the extensive damage to crops and properties brought about by typhoons Unding, Violeta, Winnie and Yoyong, Insular Life is extending assistance to its policyholders residing in Quezon Province, Occidental Mindoro, Legaspi, Masbate, Naga, Iriga, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, Pampanga, Cagayan, Isabela and Nueva Vizcaya.

The assistance is by way of an extension of grace period for an additional thirty (30) days, making up a total of sixty-one (61) days grace period for premiums due from October 16, 2004 to December 15, 2004. Payment tendered within sixty-one (61) days from due date of the premium and/or old loan interest, will be accepted without overdue interest.

This gesture of concern will hopefully give Insular Life policyholders in the stricken areas some time to recover from the ill effects brought about by the recent calamities.

INSULAR LIFE
Insular Life Corporate Centre, Insular Life Drive
Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang1781, Muntinlupa City
Tel. No.: (632) 771-1818 • Fax No.: (632) 771-1717
Email: headofc@insular.com.ph • Website: www.insularlife.com.ph

Dec. inflation rate seen at 7.6-8.1%

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday said the inflation rate in December was expected to surge to 7.6 to 8.1 percent due to the combined impact of the typhoons that recently hit the country, hike in power rates and the seasonal Christmas spending spree.

In a press briefing, BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said these inflationary pressures would likely be transitory. However, "measured" increases in the BSP policy rates would likely happen by the first half of next year.

The increases will likely start to taper off in June, Buenaventura said.

But the BSP chief said that any monetary tightening next year would not hurt the private sector as it would be offset by the expected improvement in the government's revenue collections.

This assumed that the new tax reform measures pushed by the Macapagal-Arroyo administration would start to bear fruit.

As the government collects higher revenues, it is expected to cut down on domestic borrowings.

In the first few weeks of December, the country was battered by a series of weather disturbances—storm "Unding," tropical depression "Winnie" and typhoon "Yoyong."

The biggest threat to consumer prices in the country has been the skyrocketing oil prices. Even a visiting International Monetary Fund mission has expressed concern over the sharp rise of inflation in the Philippines, suggesting the need for monetary tightening soon.

Case vs Skycable junked

By Clarissa S. Batino

NOW, even cable television can carry advertisements just like free TV.

The National Telecommunications Commission has effectively allowed cable TV firms to air advertisements after the regulator on Dec. 10 dismissed a case against the Lopez-owned SkyCable network for putting out ads on paid television from 1999 to 2001.

"CATV operators may now show and solicit or otherwise engage in commercial advertisements for consideration subject to the consent of program providers in whose programs spot advertisements will be inserted by CATV, whether these program providers be local broadcast, international or non-broadcast networks," the NTC said in its order.

NTC Chair Ronald Solis said the Commission would draft an order within the first quarter of 2005 that would prescribe limits on cable TV advertising.

"We will impose limits on cable TV advertising and that would be included in a circular we hope to issue within the first quarter next year," the NTC chief said. "We will sit down with the players to hear their inputs."

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- 256MB DDR Memory
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- Combo DVD + CDRW Drive
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- Free Carry Case

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 21, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3	3	3	3	20,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	27	27	26.5	27	747,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	51.5	51.5	51	51.5	927,300
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	46.5	46.5	46.5	46.5	23,000
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	80,000
International Exch. Bank	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	1,410,600
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26	26.5	26	26.5	97,400
Prudential Bank	380	380	380	380	200
Philippine National Bank	23	23	23	23	800
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	16,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	8,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
ATR Kim Eng Fin. Corp.	2.04	2.04	2.04	2.04	15,049,000
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	100,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1800	1810	1800	1810	360
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	18.25	18.5	18.25	18.5	15,100
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.66	1.66	3,254,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	935	935	910	915	34,750
Ipeople Inc.	2.75	2.85	2.75	2.85	12,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	100,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.24	2.24	2.22	2.22	91,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.48	2.5	2.48	2.5	3,769,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	180,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1290	1290	1280	1280	59,280
Ivantage Corp.	0.71	0.71	0.69	0.69	41,900,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	11,300,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	15.5	15.75	15.5	15.75	7,800
Manila Electric Co. B	24.75	24.75	24.5	24.5	527,700
Petron Corp.	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.2	1,117,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.06	1.08	1.06	1.08	120,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	5.8	5.8	5.7	5	7 4,075,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.3	8 10,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.3.	6 210,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	12,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.96	1.96	1.9	1.96	2,694,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31.5	31.5	30.5	30.5	208,800
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28	28	28	28	16,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	57.5	57.5	57.5	108,200
San Miguel Corp. B	75	75	74.5	7	5 24,700
Vitarich Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.2	8 250,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	10,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.004	0.004	0.004	0	4 5,000,000
Ayala Corp.	6.6	6.6	6.4	6.5	2,642,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.2	8 100,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.2	3.2	3.15	3.2	6,003,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	93,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	20,000,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.68	0.68	0.67	0.67	12,780,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.215	0.215	0.21	0.21	1,240,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.12	0.12	0.105	0.105	840,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.75	3.75	460,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	1,000,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.65	816,000
F&J Prince Holdings Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	10,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	30	30.5	30	30.5	1,230,800
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	300,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.055	0.055	2,900,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3	3	3	3	27,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.08	2.18	2.02	2.18	2,348,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	500,000
Medco Holdings	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	9,300,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	665,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.33	35,040,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	9,400,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.04	1.1	1.04	1.1	8,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	100,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	200,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	230,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	10,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	200,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.6	2,150,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.08	1.12	1.06	1.06	1,801,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.56	0.57	0.56	0.57	250,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	450,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	18.5	18.75	18.25	18.25	1,686,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,700
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	2,900
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	8	8.6	8	8.6	191,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.9	4,902,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	110,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	540,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.245	0.25	0.245	0.245	2,460,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.13	0.135	4,700,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	50,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	3,690,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.08	1.12	1.08	1.12	4,897,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	60,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.52	0.52	1,500,000
Primex Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	100,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.48	2.48	2.48	2.48	20,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	550,000
SM Development Corp.	1.4	1.42	1.4	1.4	404,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	1,039,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	43,400,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	151,000
Benguet Corp. A	3	3.3	3	3.3	17,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	5,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.27	0.28	0.26	0.28	29,120,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.37	0.4	0.37	0.4	57,120,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	66,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.025	0.026	0.025	0.026	24,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.0048	0.0048	0.0046	0.0046	22,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.64	0.68	0.64	0.66	2,330,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.7	0.7	0.68	0.7	10,090,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	90,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.009	0.0095	0.009	0.009	35,000,000
Interport Res.	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	20,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	25,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	1,000,000
Pacifica	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	2,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.04	0.04	0.037	0.04	33,200,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	18,480,260	127,091,710.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	200,573,830	361,498,510.00
PRO	25,022,000	51,871,680.00
Mining	255,323,000	41,776,200.00
OIL	116,200,000	1,784,200.00
GRAND TOTALS :	615,599,090	584,022,300.00

	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	529.63	UP 1.59
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,742.14	DOWN 24.54
PRO	666.60	DOWN 3.35
Mining	2,637.75	UP 95.83
OIL	1.95	UNCH 0.00
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	1,144.30	UP 1.33
Composite	1,775.45	DOWN 10.80

NO. OF ADVANCES: 33, NO. OF DECLINES: 38, NO. OF UNCHANGED: 41, NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 112, NO. OF TRADES: 2,130

DISCLOSURES

GOTESCO Land Inc. said it did not hold board meetings in 2004 due to its inability to muster a quorum.

* * *

EVER Gotesco Resources and Holdings Inc. elected the following officers: Jose Go, chair and president; Evelyn Go, treasurer and Vicente Cañoneo, corporate secretary and compliance officer.

* * *

PRUDENTIAL Bank extended the terms of the following officers (on a contractual basis from Jan. 1 to June 30, 2005): A. Benedicto Santos, EVP; Lauro Jocson, SVP; Manolo Hilario, SVP; and Felipe Gella, First VP.

Compiled by D.J. Yap, PDI Research

CAGELCO II

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The Cagayan II Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CAGELCO II) is inviting all interested bidders to pre-qualify and to bid for the following materials and equipment:

1. WOOD AND CONCRETE POLES, WIRES, TRANSFORMERS, INSULATORS AND OVERHEAD FAULT INDICATORS
   To be qualified, bidder must have fully complied with the following:
1) Accreditation requirements (for submission to PBAC Chairman, Mrs. Blandina Y. Madamba)
   a) Company Profile
   b) Business Registration
   c) Business Permit
   d) BIR/VAT Certificate
   e) Latest Income Tax Return (ITR)
   f) List of Clients for a period of 3 years, if applicable
2) Must be able to pay P2,000.00 (for this particular bidding only and not refundable) for the bid documents during the pre-bidding conference.

CAGELCO II reserves the right to reject any/or all bid without any reason, waive any formality therein, accept proposal most advantageous to the cooperative and assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify any bidder for expense or, losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bid nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

Pre-bid conference and bidding schedules shall be informed to all qualified bidders through fax and mails.

Deadline of submission of requirements – December 29, 2004.

(Sgd.) GABRIEL A. TORDESILLAS
General Manager

(PDI – Dec. 17 & 22, 2004)

Metrobank gets fortified

METROBANK has now become a serious player in the competitive Bonifacio Global City real estate business.

The bank of taipan George Ty emerged as the owner of the over 10-hectare Fort Bonifacio property, after submitting the lone bid of over P2.4 billion in yesterday's sheriff sale at the Pasig Regional Trial Court.

The sale came after Metrobank itself obtained court approval to foreclose on the real estate mortgage that Metro Pacific Corp. had submitted.

In addition to the land, Metrobank also acquired 12 units of the Pacific Plaza Towers. One other bidder, said to be from the Gaisano group, acquired one condominium unit with a P23-million bid.

The balance of seven condo units will be returned to Metro Pacific since, according to the grapevine, the proceeds from the sale of the over 10-hectare land and the 13 condo units were enough to extinguish Metro Pacific's obligations to Metrobank.

Metro Pacific said yesterday's auction should have wiped off the largest remaining debt in its balance sheet.

It is not immediately clear what Metrobank intends to do with the Fort property. Incidentally, another Ty company, Federal Homes, is engaged in building residential condominiums for the upper and middle-class market, notably in Greenhills and the Roxas Boulevard reclaimed area but so far never in the Fort.

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

Metro Pacific, in the meantime, is expected to parlay its toehold within the Citra Skyway project into a new major business leg—infrastructure/tollways.

Derailed for dummy damage

PAUL Daza, Metro Rail Transit senior vice president for corporate and legal affairs, has been ordered by the Makati Regional Trial Court to pay P650,000 in damages to his Malaysian principal.

In addition, Judge Cesar Untalan ordered Daza and his group to recognize Philip KC Ng as the owner of 7,000 shares, effectively 70 percent, of Philippine Laminate Inc., the company formed by Daza's group on behalf of their Malaysian principal.

Daza's group claimed that Ng's name could not appear in the shareholders' record since the company was engaged in retail and that Ng, as a foreigner, was prohibited from engaging in the business.

But Judge Untalan ruled that laminates are not considered consumer goods and that the company that Daza formed was itself never engaged in retailing.

Ng sued after Daza's group resisted his efforts not only to recognize him as the principal and majority shareholder, but also his right to vote and be voted upon, and to inspect the corporate records.

Architectural misappropriation

NOTED architect Jose Mañosa is crying foul over the disappearance of his name as the author of the architectural plan for the proposed Urdaneta Village Friendship Hall.

Instead, a committee of "various persons" said to be close to the barangay captain now appears as having drawn up the master plan for the proposed friendship hall, as well as that of the village's park and playground.

Apparently, since the barangay is funding the renovation project, a number of barangay bureaucrats now want to take the credit for themselves.

Heard through the grapevine

THE FAMILY of Max Borromeo has become the undisputed owner of Ford Alabang, after completing the buyout of the shareholdings of Union Bank and banker Armand Braun in the dealership.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtds.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

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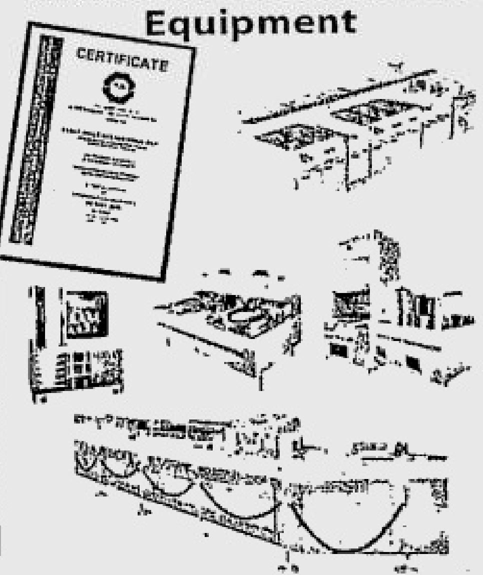

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What is the best way to apologize at work?

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner

DEAR WW: I have to apologize to a coworker for sticking him with a bunch of extra work. This relationship is very important and I don't want to screw it up again. Can you tell me how to make an apology stick?

In The Wrong

A West Seneca, NY motorist, after discovering there was a small fire in his engine, drove into a self-service car wash thinking he could use all that water to extinguish the flames. The problem? He didn't have any coins. The fire was eventually extinguished, but not before it destroyed half of the car wash's eight bays.

Just like that motorist learned, the sooner you put out a fire the less damage it will do. It's no different at work. I've included tips for delivering an effective apology below. For more, check out "Lettitia Baldridge's New Complete Guide to Executive Manners" (Rawson, 1993).

Say that you are sorry. You'll never go wrong when you start your apology with, "I'm sorry." It's amazing how much healing can come from those two simple words. The longer you talk before you say you're sorry, the greater the risk that they won't believe that you really are. So always lead with the most important part of the apology.

Admit that you were wrong. Have you ever had someone say that they were apologizing to you but it sounded like they were really blaming you for what happened? Talk about fanning the flames. That's why it's so important to clearly say that you were wrong; "It was wrong for me to take a long lunch when we're so far behind."

Acknowledge the problems you caused. Acknowledging the problems that were caused by your actions shows the apologizee that you really understand the problems you made for them. This can be quite painful, but it should make a huge difference in how the person you are apologizing to feels about your apology. You don't have to go into agonizing detail, just say enough to show them that you tried to see it all through their eyes. For example, "I should have never left work early the day before a sales presentation. I realize it created a lot of extra work for you."

Show them that you learned from the situation. Let the person know you won't repeat the error by telling them exactly what you'll do to keep it from happening again (for example, "From now on I'll ask your opinion before I make a commitment to a customer."). Another way to accomplish this is to make a joke, at your own expense of course, about what happened. Proceed down this path with caution, however, you can make things worse if they think you aren't taking the apology seriously. On the other hand, a little self-deprecating humor can go a long way toward allowing you to work together comfortably in the future.

Follow these tips and you won't only not get burned, you may actually increase the respect of your coworkers.

Here are the results from a recent workingwounded.com/ABCnews.com online ballot: What do you do when you screw up at work?

—Blame it on someone else, 2.8 percent

—Pretend nothing is wrong, 4.2 percent

—Accept part of the blame, 10.9 percent

—Own up to my mistake, 82 percent

(Mr. Rosner, an internationally syndicated columnist, author and speaker, is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. E-mail him at bob@workingwounded.com.)

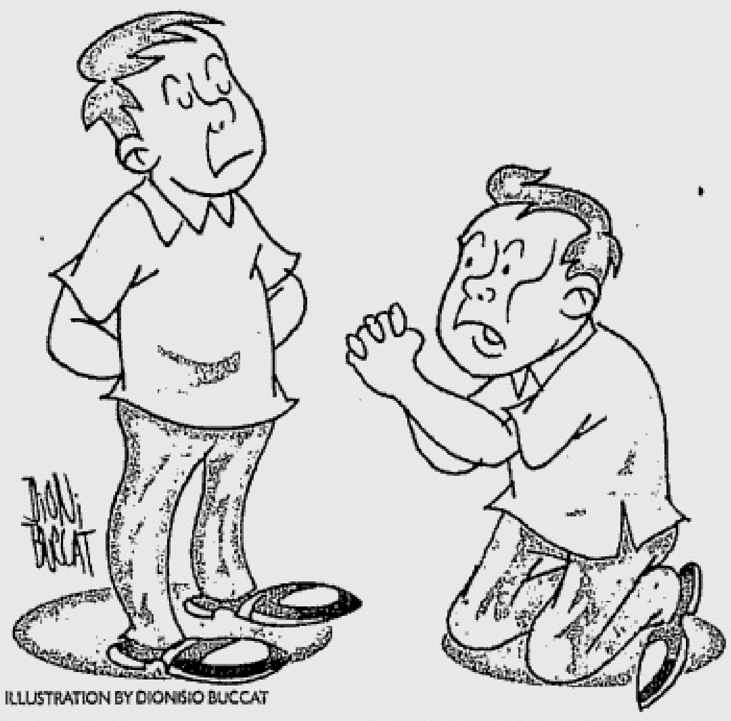

ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

'I want to help Filipinos'

By Tita Datu Puangco

Advice
FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

I COME from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. I'm an analyst/programmer in a company. On my second business trip to Manila, I intentionally contacted certain individuals whom I feel, given the chance, could do better in life. These individuals have expressed their desire to go into business and/or continue schooling. I have not had enough time to know them better or their sincerity, but for the time being, I trust my instinct.

Back home, I have been doing a lot of thinking on how I can help, however small my assistance may be. For example, one individual wants to put up a small grocery selling rice or canned goods (which I understand is known here as a *sari-sari* store), but he does not have enough funds.

I am unsure about personally loaning the initial capital needed because the individual might not have the necessary expertise. So I researched and came across some organizations that do lend out small loans to interested parties to expand their business or set up new ones. More importantly, they monitor the progress of the business and provide training on setting up and running a business. The organization is TSPI (Tulay Sa Pag-unlad Inc.). I'm not sure if you have come across them and know if they are reliable. I have written to them, but there were no replies.

At the same time, I discovered some articles written by you on business and English classes. I have some problems communicating with my acquaintances through e-mail since English is not their strength. Do you by any chance conduct English classes? And do you by any chance know what are the requirements for setting up a *sari-sari* store or a "real" grocery and for getting a start-up loan? I would appreciate it if you could throw some light or direct me to the appropriate persons.

Want To Help

Thank you for caring and reaching out to individuals in our country. Indeed, we become happier individuals when we reach out to others and think less often of our own needs and interests.

You ask what are the requirements and skills needed to set-up a *sari-sari* store. A *sari-sari* store sells things that are used or consumed on a day-to-day basis. The owner of such a store buys wholesale and then sells retail. The basic permit may be a municipal or city permit to operate a business.

Regular *sari-sari* stores are operated by the owner or can be a mom-and-pop kind of operation. What skills are needed? You need to have functional literacy skills of reading, writing and computing. Then, it also helps if you have common sense (like knowing that the best policy is to require people to pay cash rather than sell things on loan) and entrepreneurship skills. On top of these, your presence and availability are required.

The investment required to set-up can range from a low of P2,000 to a high of P20,000.

You mentioned TSPI. Yes, it is a very reliable lending foundation. We will try to find the right person who can answer your query. Yes, we offer public seminars to enhance English proficiency. You can get in touch with the Ancilla Business Training Center to get the details on the English courses we offer. All the best. May you continue to be of help to people whom you meet.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send feedback through e-mail to advice@ancillaedc.com.ph *or fax to* 892-2902.)

Be part of People at Work

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Thank God I'm a mom!

WORKING MOM

Gina Abuyuan-Llanes

ONE morning last week, I woke up and said my usual thank you prayer for a night spent sound and safe in my home with my children, and another lovely day to look forward to. In mid-prayer, however, I found myself picking up my phone and texting this message, sending it to almost all the moms in my book: "Have you ever thanked God for being a mom—not for having great kids or having a good husband—but just for being a mom?" It was like God Himself asked me to do it for Him.

The answers came flooding in throughout the day, spilling over to the next. I could imagine all these busy moms stopping in mid-work, sneaking in a text during meetings, in-between takes, during coffee breaks. Once again, the great sorority called Motherhood rose to declare their love for their Reasons for Being: their children.

I wish I could share all their replies, but this space allows me only a few hundred words. Still, I'm certain these ones will touch you moms as they have me—and make you say "thank you" yet one more time (all the time!) to the God who gave you the ultimate privilege of birthing life, raising life, and continuing the cycle of love and gentleness only a mom can know.

Have a happy, peaceful, grateful Christmas!

Yes I have! Countless times! Since the day we found out I was pregnant, my husband and I have thanked God that He found us "worthy" of being entrusted with another person's life. I thank Him for the joy of hearing Psalms, almost three years old, laugh and the delight of seeing his eyes light up whenever something excites him, and for the precious times Psalms says "Mommy, love *kita*" while holding my face between his small hands ... I'm so thankful I'm a mom! *—A., ad sales supervisor*

I want to say thank you to God for giving me my kids because after all the years I've endured, full of pain, anger, loneliness, they taught me to believe that there is a God. They give me hope and happiness I never imagined possible. They taught me that every moment counts, to love the simple things in life. That what matters most is people, not things. Not what was then, but what is now. No matter how sad or stressful the day gets, they make me hold on and never give up. They make me want to be better. Be the best I can be. *—P., makeup artist/model/stylist*

I always thank God, Jesus, and our Lady of Guadalupe for allowing me to be a mother. I grew up surrounded by so much love, but I realized that the kind of love I experienced before was a fraction of the love that fills my life now that I'm a mom. I truly love unconditionally. And Sophia's love for me overwhelms me everyday.

Sophia is a miracle. She was conceived in honeymoon. My pregnancy was threatened at five months—extreme bleeding, complete bed rest. Some doctors prepared me for miscarriage. But she is truly a miracle. A gift from God. He made me a mom! I thank God everyday.

Since my mid-20s, I've always prayed that God grant me the experience of being a mom. I had fear and doubts I couldn't conceive, just because so many women have reproductive problems. Then in 2000, I had a scuba diving incident. An ovarian cyst erupted underwater in Mindoro. I suffered from internal bleeding—loss of blood in the middle of the sea. It was a miracle I was able to reach Manila 12 hours later, surgery 20 hours later. I almost died. When I woke up, I was instinctively saying a prayer: God, give me the chance to be a mom.

Sooo long my text. I really believe in the power of prayer and miracles.*—D., TV host/magazine editor*

Every single day I thank God for making me a mom. Since I did not bear my own children, I am very aware that having these lovely kids in my care is a privilege and an honor passed on to me through the sacrifice of their own mothers. Every moment of joy with my kids is a moment of joy taken away from their birth mothers. I am constantly and will be forever grateful. *—A., editorial director*

Yes, I always thank Him for being a mom because I love taking care of people. The feeling is indescribable! *—D., consultant*

It's second nature-being a mom is truly second skin! It's truly the most wonderful thing and the most pervasive feeling. I'm not grateful like it's outside of me. It is me! *—G., businesswoman*

I always thank God for being a mom. My kids make me feel complete. They are one of the reasons of our being. *—J., PR consultant*

Yup, I do. It's a gift from God and my heart is full of gratitude when I am able to do mommy tasks. Who's this please? (I answer) Oh, sorry girl! That was one nice text I couldn't help but reply to without knowing who sent it. Cheers to all moms! *—C., HR Manager*

(Gina Abuyuan-Llanes is editor in chief of Working Mom magazine. Feedback is welcome at gina_llanes@abs.pinoycentral.com.)

What does it take to start an HR consulting practice?

By Roberta Chinsky Matuson

(Part II)

WE'VE all met successful HR professionals who took the leap into consulting and now appear to be living the good life. Of course, we weren't with them when they were in the throes of getting their practices off the ground.

The first article in this two-part series introduced two individuals in the midst of starting their own practices: Gail Finger, principal of Amherst, Massachusetts-based Finger Consulting, and Helene Buchler, an independent HR consultant based in Wellesley, Massachusetts. Their experiences give us a glimpse into the startup phase of independent HR consulting.

The plusses of independence

As with anything, in life there are plusses and minuses to running your own HR consulting practice.

Buchler enjoys the independence and flexibility associated with a private practice, and she finds that being able to set her own schedule lets her keep a sense of balance in her life. "I am able to be more creative, which in turn means a better product for clients," says Buchler. Another benefit to having a private practice, she says, is being regarded as an expert.

Add to that list the benefit of meeting people, says Finger, who makes new contacts every day. Finger also notes the potential she has to make more money than she could in her previous work.

The minuses

If the life of an HR consultant were so easy, wouldn't we all be out there consulting?

Buchler says it can be isolating to work out of a home office, without having colleagues around to bounce ideas off. She addresses this issue by making an extra effort to touch base with her peers.

Finger believes that not having a steady paycheck could be a big minus for some people. She was self-employed previously, so she is accustomed to this way of life. But it's not for everyone, so if you go the independent route, be sure to have enough in the bank to ride out the slow times.

Learn from others' mistakes

Consider yourself lucky. As you think about starting your own HR practice, you can learn from someone else's mistakes. When Buchler and Finger were asked to reveal their top errors, their list included the following:

- Taking too long to find the best professional organization to join for networking purposes.
- Not having enough confidence in the beginning—hesitation can cost leads.
- Giving a price quote before really understanding all of the issues.
- Not asking for a percentage of the project's total cost upfront.
- Giving clients too much unbilled time.
- Not charging for additional work.
- Closing deals too slowly.

Putting lessons to work

If you still have a yearning to give independent consulting a try, consider the following as you aim to avoid the mistakes our two consultants made.

- Be patient. The sales cycle is a lot longer than you think.
- Be prepared to spend a good portion of your time selling your services.
- Make sure you have contacts in your field so you can outsource work when necessary. Sometimes all the work comes in at once, and you will work nights and weekends.
- Set guidelines and boundaries with clients so you are not giving away your services.
- Be prepared to give clients what they want, even if you disagree. There are ways to do this and still maintain your integrity.
- Remember why you decided to take the leap to independent consulting. Don't lose sight of this reason when times get tough.

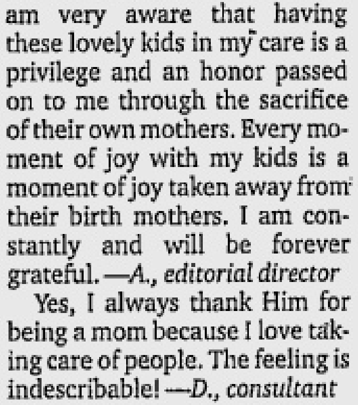

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

If independent HR consulting is right for you, then put together your business plan and move forward. Who knows? In six month's time, we might be featuring you.

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UK management expert says putting people first is essential in leadership

By Candy G. Villanueva
Contributor

WHAT do you think are the qualities of an ideal leader? In the last presidential election, what qualifications of the presidential candidate did you consider when you wrote your candidate's name on the ballot? Would you prefer leader A, who is charismatic, visionary, polite, courteous, predictable, cautious and trusted by his team? Or would you rather vote for leader B, who is inspirational but rude, bad-tempered, unpredictable, unappreciative, insensitive, alienated from his colleagues and has a track record of failure?

If you are one of the many who chose leader A, you just voted for a tyrannical mass murderer. Yes, you just voted for Adolf Hitler. Hitler was known to be a charismatic personality who was loved by many for his graciousness and charm. Yet, with a charming smile, he ordered the death of millions of Jews.

For the few who chose leader B, you just voted for Winston Churchill, a revolutionary leader who broke all the rules. He was a known boozer who had very unpopular ideas yet did great things for his country and wrote a Nobel Prize piece that inspires leaders up to this day. Common sense and even common decency would push us to choose for leader B.

And what is the point of this little exercise? According to David Freemantle, UK's expert on leadership, the point is, there is no such thing as a template for the perfect leader. Great leaders have qualities or characteristics different from the other.

Years of experience

"There is no textbook answer to what is an effective leader. You have to find one and supply your own answer," says Freemantle. This statement makes sense but it leads you to ask, if there is no definite template, how can you become, if not a perfect leader, at least a good leader? A self-proclaimed student of success, Freemantle claims that in his studies and observations of great leaders, he noticed one fundamental thing that they all had in common—that is, above everything else, they put people first.

"In my many years working as a production manager at Mars Ltd., I have learned many things and one of them was that to excel in business, you have to invest an inordinate amount of time, energy and effort in getting the people thing right," shares Freemantle. Author of over a dozen books on leadership and customer service, Freemantle is a well-respected consultant and trainer of hundreds of top companies and corporations worldwide including the Shangri-La Hotels in Asia, Glaxo SmithKline in the UK, Nike in France and Hallmark Cards in the USA.

He believes that if you don't focus your management energies and resources on people, they won't focus their energies on the company. Demoralized employees are not an uncommon thing. In fact, you may be one of those who gripe incessantly because of low pay, big bad bosses or unhealthy work conditions. This happens because some companies become so obsessed with short-term profit that they neglect the essential people factor in their business equation.

In his many years working for the American chocolate manufacturing company Mars, Ltd., Freemantle learned the value of putting people first. Freemantle carried the same people first principle throughout his career and in his dealings with top international corporations. His observations were further heightened when he worked as personnel director of Perkins Engineering and later as director of personnel for Board of British Caledonian Airways. He later left the company to set up his own consultancy business, Superboss Ltd. He wrote about his experiences in several management and leadership books, one of which is "The Biz, Little Things that Make a Big Difference to Team Motivation and Leadership," where he stressed the importance of putting people first.

Cost-cutting

Freemantle once had an enlightening conversation with one of Britain's best-known entrepreneurs, Sir Richard Branson. In their conversation, he told Freemantle that the airline business has been through a lot especially after the 9/11 incident. Yet through it all, he put his people first. While the most common and logical solution for most companies was to cut cost by firing people, Branson did the positive thing and created opportunities for revenue instead. He maintained all his employees in spite of the decline in airline business and used his resources instead to increase his market.

Branson, founder of Virgin Music Label and Virgin Atlantic Airways, Britain's second largest carrier, is best known for his flamboyance and unorthodox way of management. And indeed, keeping his employees while everybody else was cutting costs to save their business was unconventional. He went against a common business practice to keep his people because he believes that it is his people that grow the business. Many that work for him attest that Branson treats his people with respect because he knows business is all about people business. His multimillion corporation proves his point.

In one of his leadership seminars in the Philippines conducted by Team Asia, Freemantle was approached by a cosmetics company executive who had a business dilemma. The executive was worried because the company might have to close down a plant to cut cost and save the business. This would mean laying off workers. Freemantle suggested that instead of closing down the plant, the company might consider using the plant to manufacture new products to increase the market. This way, the workers get to keep their jobs while the company increases revenue.

Putting people first means making sure that people are happy and inspired with their work. It is part of the leader's responsibility to make sure that his or her people are inspired. In his leadership seminar, he says, "A leader's role is to drive, to encourage, to nurture, and to bring out the best in employees."

Inspire people

In his book "The Biz," Freemantle shares that you don't have to be a Winston Churchill to inspire your people. According to him, all you have to be is yourself. Of course, this works on the premise that you yourself are motivated. Freemantle suggests finding value in your work and responsibility. It's all about choice he says. You can choose to be demotivated by getting defensive and negative when faced with a crisis or choose to be motivated by learning from experiences. A manager or leader may also choose either to rebuke or counsel. The thing to remember is to create a positive nurturing environment.

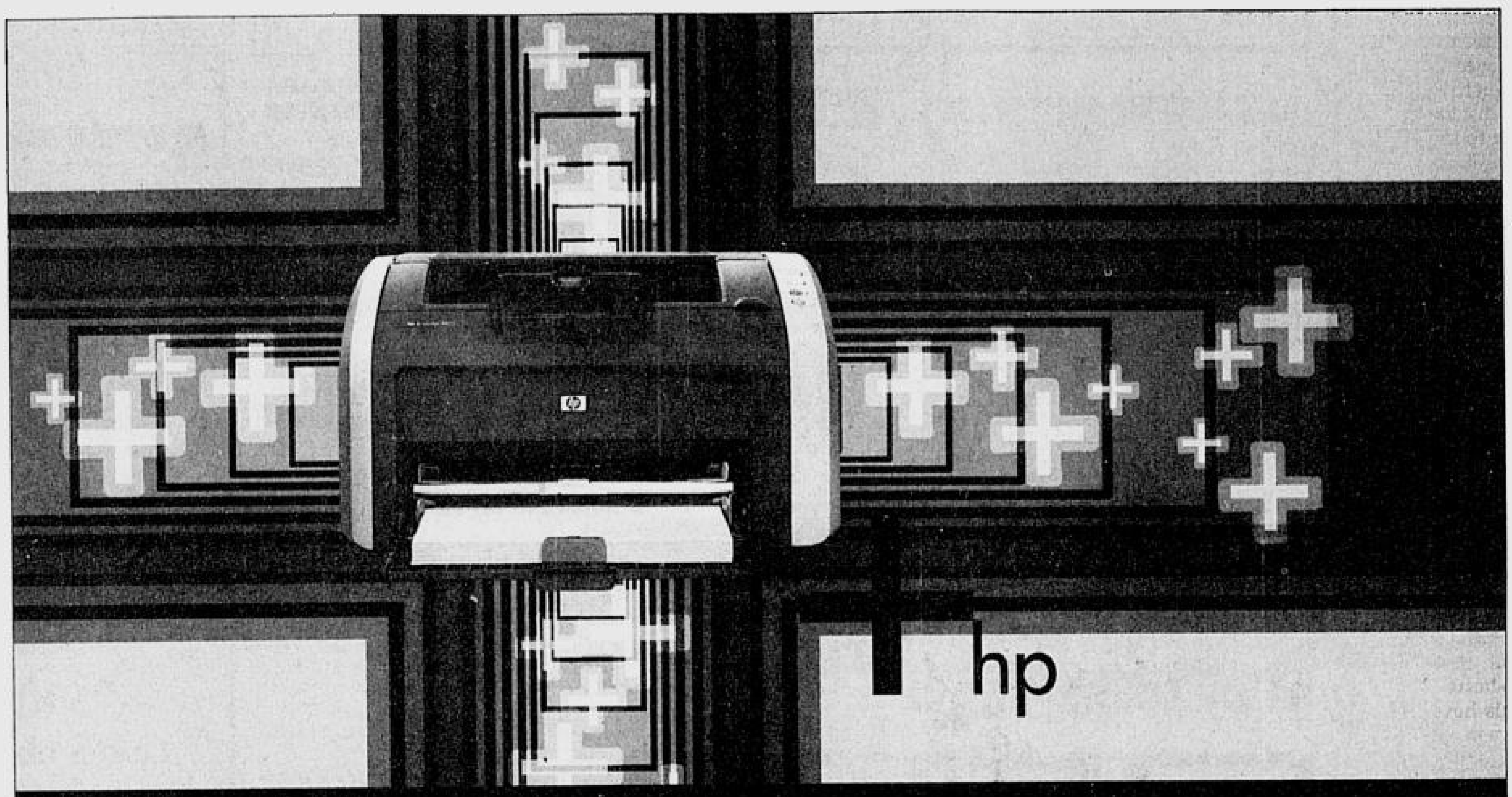
"Ignite the essential spirit that illuminates your unique soul and allow it to energize those around you," shares Freemantle. By doing so, Freemantle explains that you can influence your people to do better and go beyond potentials. And to inspire, you don't have to write a Nobel Prize winning piece. Inspiring may be as simple as a pat on the back or a compliment. Studies show that physical connection can do wonders. Notice how clasping a person's elbow when shaking hands makes a difference. A hug after an accomplishment or sudden bad news is also a simple but meaningful gesture.

Empower with trust

Another way of putting people first is making sure that they are empowered. "You need to make your staff feel like they are entrepreneurs too," says Freemantle. This can be achieved by allowing them to take risks and make financial or business decisions on their own. But what if by doing so, the employee makes mistakes and causes the company a lot of money? Freemantle explains that by empowering people, it doesn't necessarily mean total free reign but enough room to make decisions and mistakes. People after all learn by making mistakes.

"Remove the shackles and trust your people to get on and make all the necessary decisions," the author wrote. He further wrote that there is no need for your staff to come to you every time he or she needs to spend a few cents on a client. Permission is only necessary when it comes to major expenditures. In fact, permission may not even be the perfect term. Allow room for discussion and include your people in the decision-making process.

DAVID Freemantle (seventh from left) with his students in one of his leadership seminars by Team Asia.
CANDY G. VILLANUEVA/CONTRIBUTOR



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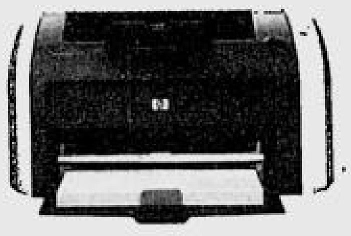
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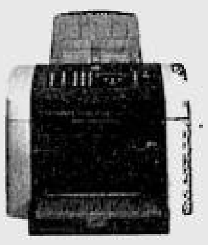
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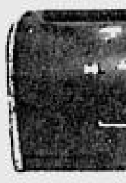
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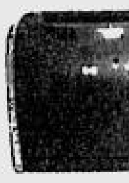
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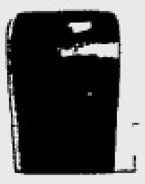
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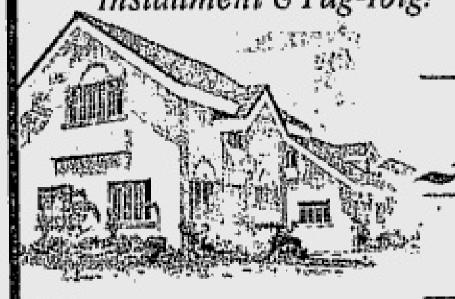

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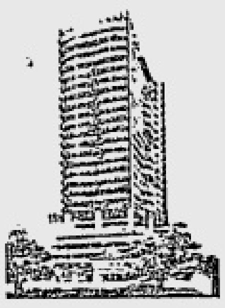

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ISABEL DAVID TORRES

of Sta. Cruz, Laguna and Quezon City

Returned home to the loving arms of God on Monday, the 20th of December, 2004. She is survived by her beloved husband **Claring** and by her devoted children and their families: **Boy** and **Rose, Noel, Dennis** and **Michael; Baby** and **Willy** (†), **Rona** (†) and **Lisa; Henry** (†) and **Nidia, Tricia** and **Ging; Satur** and **Lorie,** and **Oscar; Susan** and **Sara; Caroline** and **Howard,** and **Marko.**

She lies in state at Chapel 14, La Funeraria Paz, 143 Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. Her mortal remains will be cremated on Wednesday, the 22nd of December, 2004 after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

Her family requests the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

KC PEREZ DE VENECIA

(April 6, 1988 – December 17, 2004)

Beloved daughter to **Speaker Jose** and **Georgina de Venecia**,
wonderful sister to **Alexandra Haner, Leslie Norton, Vivian Garcia,**
Jose de Venecia III, Carissa Cruz, Felipe Cruz III,
best friend and sister to **Christopher de Venecia** and
loving granddaughter to **Azucena Vera Perez**, amazing classmate,
precious niece, member of the cool cousin group *The Bulilit Gang*
and cherished friend.

A fun-loving, passionate, sweet, intelligent girl who lived
life to the fullest. She spoke her mind freely and loved with all her heart.
Please pray for her eternal rest.

Her remains lie in state at Santuario de San Antonio Church, Forbes Park,
Makati. Interment Mass will be today, December 22 at 9:00 a.m.
at Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati.

In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate donations
to the KC de Venecia Foundation.

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We sadly remember the 2nd death anniversary of "Migs". We also would like to request those whose lives he has touched, to join us in thanking the Lord for his life, reminiscing fond and cherished memories of him.

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For more information, please call Ms. Jane V. Santiago at telephone numbers 892-2145; 818-4733.

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) invites all interested bidders to participate in the bidding for the **"REPLACEMENT OF TWO (2) PASSENGER ELEVATOR CARS"** at the Muralla wing of the DOLE Building with an approved budget for the contract of P5 Million Pesos.

Interested bidders must register and submit registration requirements to the Property Division, Administrative Service, 2nd Floor, DOLE Building, Muralla Street, Intramuros, Manila starting December 15, 2004. The checklist of requirements for registration shall be secured from the same office. Deadline for registration is on January 3, 2005.

Only bidders duly registered with the DOLE may be allowed to participate in the competitive bidding activities, to wit:

ACTIVITY	DATE	TIME	VENUE
Pre-Bid Conference	January 4, 2005	1:30 p.m.	Conference Room, 2nd Floor, DOLE Executive Building, San Jose Street, Intramuros, Manila
Submission of Eligibility Requirements	January 17, 2005	Between 1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.	– same –
Submission of Bids	January 26, 2005	Between 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.	– same –

Eligibility requirements shall be distributed during the Pre-Bid Conference or they can be secured on January 4, 2005 at the Property Division, Administrative Service, 2nd Floor DOLE Bldg., Intramuros, Manila.

Eligible Bidders are also enjoined to inspect the DOLE premises prior to the conduct of the Pre-bid Conference in coordination with the General Services Division, Administrative Service.

Eligibility documents shall be submitted to the DOLE Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) in a sealed envelope marked with the title of the item/project to be bidded and the name of the bidder in capital letters addressed to the undersigned on the date and time specified. Registered bidders are invited to witness the eligibility check on the said date at exactly 2:00 p.m. at the same venue.

Interested Bidders are requested to present their proposals, personally or through their authorized representatives, on the date of the bidding. The DOLE reserves the right to reject any or all bids, without offering any reason, waive any informality therein and make an award to the bidder whose bid is most advantageous to the Department. The DOLE assumes no obligation for whatever losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

For further inquiries/information, please get in touch with Ms. Lily Pearl L. Guerrero and Ms. Liberty C. Angeles, members of the BAC Secretariat at telephone numbers 527-3480 and 527-3583.

(Sgd.) Atty. **BENEDICTO ERNESTO R. BITONIO JR.**
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee and
Assistant Secretary for Policy and Program Support

(PDI–Dec. 15 & 22, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
AND COMMUNICATIONS
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC), through its Prequalification, Bids and Awards Committee (PBAC) for all projects under the Rail Sector, invites Consultants to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the MRT 3 Phase 2 Project.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The DOTC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive minor defects and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government. The DOTC assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

For further inquiries, please call Engr. Roberto Jaime Q. Salazar at Tel. No. 637-3061.

(Sgd.) **LEANDRO R. MENDOZA**
Secretary

(PDI–December 22, 2004)

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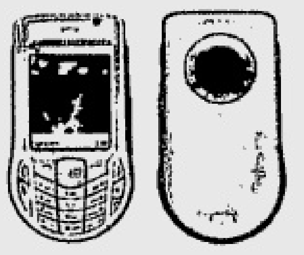

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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

'On the Road' wins best motoring column

INQUIRER's Aida Sevilla-Mendoza became the first winner of Ford Awards' Best Motoring Column.

2 new categories

For her "On the Road" column titled "The Elephant behind the Driver," she won P25,000, a trophy and a Ford jacket to symbolize her inclusion in the elite Henry Ford Awards winners circle.

The other winner of a new category, Best Auto Test Drive, is Andy Leuterio of Philippine Star. His entry "Nerdz Jazz Wanna Have Fun" won for him the same prizes Mendoza received.

The two were honored along with the country's other finest writers and photographers during ceremonies at the Dusit Hotel in Makati. Henry Ford Awards is the first and only award-giving body that recognizes excellence in motoring journalism.

Repeat winners

The awards program saw the return to the podium of repeat winners like James Deakin of C! Magazine and Vernon Sarne of Manila Times (both third win).

Siblings Ulysses (second win) and Jason Ang (third win) of Motioncars.com also won this year.

A total of 104 entries poured in for a chance to be recognized in nine categories: Published Photograph for Newspaper, Published Photograph for Magazine, Auto Event Story (Print), Auto Industry Story (Print), Automotive Online Feature, Automotive Television Feature and the Best Ford Feature Story. New additions included the Auto Test Drive and Motoring Column Issue.

Commitment

"The Henry Ford Awards speaks of our commitment to acknowledge and recognize the immense contributions of motoring journalists in informing and educating the public about the automotive industry," said Henry Co, president of Ford Group Philippines.

"Your stories have not only kept the public in touch with developments in the motoring world, but have kept car manufacturers like Ford on our toes in ensuring we give our consumers the best vehicles and services we can offer," he added

Each of the category winners took home P25,000, while the Best Ford Feature story winner pocketed P35,000.

Full list

The full list of this year's winners:

- Best Published Photograph for Magazine—"Drift Away" by James Deakin, C! Magazine
- Best Published Photograph for Broadsheet—"A Hundred Years Young" by Ulysses Ang, Manila Times
- Best Auto Event Story—"Life Begins with the S40" by Vernon Sarne, Manila Times
- Best Online Feature Story—"Safety First: Driving with your most precious cargo" by Jason Ang, Motioncars.com
- Best Auto TV Feature—"Mazda3 Test Drive" by Jose Romualdez, Auto Extreme, RPN 9
- Best Auto Industry Story—"Impulse Import Buying" by James Deakin, C! Magazine
- Best Motoring Column—"The Elephant behind the Driver" by Aida Sevilla-Mendoza, Philippine Daily Inquirer
- Best Ford Feature Story—"My so-called life on the assembly line" by Vernon Sarne, Manila Times

Judges for the 2004 Henry Ford Awards were lawyer Lilia de Lima, director general, Philippine Economic Zone Authority; Antonio Mapa, president, Automobile Association Philippines; Tony Antonio, president, National Press Club; Butch Dua, president, Sacre Bleu Ford Auto Club; and Dr. Ricardo Sigua, director, National Center for Transportation Studies of UP Diliman.

The awards night was hosted by TV personality Pinky Webb, with entertainment provided by Livewire band.

The Henry Ford Awards program is part of the commitment of Ford Motor Co. Philippines to give due recognition to journalists who have supported the automotive industry by providing consumers with accurate news reports and information.

There's more than meets the eye for autoparts industry

By Tessa R. Salazar

(Second of three parts)

THE CAR parts industry may seem unglamorous and unattractive in the eyes of the automotive end users, yet not too many are aware of the implication a healthy car parts industry can bring to the local auto sector, particularly in the aspect of car pricing.

Foreign technology transfer professionals, particularly some Japanese auto experts, even dare to say that if the country could only get its act right and manage to become a significant player in the auto industry in the Asian region, it would redound to much cheaper cars for Filipino buyers, not to mention more dollars earned for the economy.

Playing major role

Let's take a look first at more of our major assembly plants, the companies which could play a major role in the future of the country's struggling car parts industry. If Laguna has "Little Detroit" in Sta. Rosa, Rizal province has its own version in Cainta. The Mitsubishi Motors plant on Ortigas Avenue extension in Cainta also has plans to churn out completely built-up units to be exported to Asean countries.

For 2006, it plans to assemble 200,000 vehicles for six to seven years, particularly a new type of SUV Mitsubishi would not want to reveal yet. Two-thirds of this number would be exported to Asean countries. Mitsubishi projects to earn up to $240 million annually while operations are in full swing. Its total project investment for this export scheme is P10 billion, P2 billion of which would be spent on tooling costs, while P5.15 billion would be allocated for the purchase of local parts.

This scheme would result in an additional 6,000 jobs for vendors. Last year, Mitsubishi was reported to have plans of exporting its Adventure AUV units by 2005. It has since denied this, saying that, instead, it would plan to manufacture and export the yet undisclosed new SUV.

However, Mitsubishi recently exported several Strada pickups to Laos and Cambodia, and two years ago exported the Adventure to Sudan, which the Sudanese government used as police cars.

Mitsubishi Motors Philippines, which started operations May 5, 1964, is the oldest and largest assembly facility of a multinational carmaker in the country (at about 190,000 square meters) and has grown to 21 dealerships nationwide with an authorized capital of P2 billion, according to the Securities and Exchange Commission records.

Auto export hub

Executive Order 224 signed by Malacañang granting export incentives to assemblers engaged in the export of completely built-up vehicles aims to push the country as an auto export hub in the Southeast Asian region.

As car companies, such as Mitsubishi, plan its assembly and manufacturing strategies for the country and the Asian region, the unheralded organizations that keep the local parts making industry in the country alive, are also mapping out the future. Yazaki-Torres Mfg. Inc., one of the 256 car parts makers in the Philippines, manufactures automotive wiring harnesses and exports them to the United States, Japan and European markets.

Largest producer

It earns dollars and is 60 percent Filipino-owned, while 40 percent belongs to Yazaki Corp, a Japanese company.

Yazaki-Torres produces wiring harness sets for up to 90,000 cars per month. It employs 9,000 people. Its average annual export is US$170 million and is considered the country's largest producer of autoparts for export.

It also manufactures battery cables, PVC electrical tapes and ignition cord sets, which are also integral parts of the wiring harness.

"The wiring harness is a bunch of electrical wires that interconnects the various electrical circuits of a motor vehicle. It is considered the nervous system of the car or vehicle, so to speak," explains Yazaki Torres president Feliciano L. Torres.

Yazaki-Torres exports 96 percent of its wiring harnesses. Of this, 58 percent is exported to United States, 28 percent to Japan and 10 percent to Europe. "Our major customers are Ford, Cooperates of Detroit Mazda Motors and Mitsubishi Motors in the United States, Ford-Jaguar in Europe and Toyota, Mazda, Honda and Nissan in Japan," he said.

Local Automotive Parts Developed and Exported

Parts that have already developed and are being exported

1. Wiring harness
2. Gear boxes (transmissions)
3. Tires
4. Batteries
5. Brakes/clutches
6. Filters
7. Radiators
8. Silencer
9. Exhaust Pipes
10. Alloy wheels

Parts That Have the Potential to be Developed and Exported

1. Steel and Aluminum Castings

- magwheel center piece, magwheel access
- automotive machinery parts
- automotive wheel rims and discs
- metal stamping / stamped parts for automotive
- brake and clutch pedals, accelerator pad pedals
- hinges, auto seat spring, frame assy
- condenser coil for aircon and evaporator assembly
- metal balls, shafting, bolts and nuts
- bracket master cylinder
- underchassis components

2. Rubber Parts

- automotive seal, O-ring
- transmission support, engine support, suspension bushing, radiator support, shock absorber bushing
- oil seal, oil filter
- mud guard rubber and cup, pedal pad, arm rest, link wood stopper and rubber handle
- radiator hose, door weather-strips, windshield weather-strips, engine mounting, bodyside mounting, door trim opening, hose for fuel, extruded and molded products, rubber plastic matting
- rubber belting and automotive fan belt

3. Interior

- seat assembly, upholstery for car seats
- door trims
- visor and headlining, car carpets and vacuum formed pe car parts

4. Fabricated Parts

- console box
- radiator shrouds
- mud guards

5. Plastic Parts

- windshield clip, carpet clip, siding clip
- knob and guide
- bezel and fuse box

6. Electrical Components

- automotive transmission units
- alternators, starters and parts
- automotive low tension wire
- electronics and semiconductor tooling
- car stereo, speaker

7. Glass Parts

- automotive tempered glass and tempered flat glass indl use

8. Design

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- die casting moulds
- tool and die design, machine/parts design and fabrication

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Fearless forecast for 2005

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

WITH 2004 WINDING down, car enthusiasts are looking forward to new car models in 2005. Here is my fearless forecast for the New Year:

- TOYOTA Motor Philippines Corp. will unveil an MPV (multipurpose vehicle) that was introduced in Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia earlier this year as the Avanza. With this seven-seater, Toyota aims to replicate the success of the Revo (Tamaraw) that was originally developed in the mid-1970s as the Kijang in Indonesia. It looks like the Avanza will eventually replace the Revo as Toyota's Asean people carrier since its powerplant, though smaller in displacement at 1.3 liters, is more advanced than the Revo's aging K-series engine, what with continuously variable valve timing, 16 valves, EFI and twin cams rear-wheel drive, a monocoque body, lower emission levels and a high ground clearance (for floods) are other attractive features of Toyota's new MPV for the Asean market.

- MITSUBISHI Motors Philippines Corp. is launching in late January two new vehicles: the Grandis minivan and the Montero Sport diesel midsize SUV. The Grandis, the fourth generation Space Wagon (not to be mixed up with the Space Gear), seats seven including driver and will be imported CBU (completely built up) from Thailand. The five-seater Montero Sport; a CBU from Japan, is powered by the same 2.8-liter turbocharged intercooled diesel engine that propels the Fieldmaster, the previous Pajero model, but will be priced lower than the Fieldmaster's P1.7 million. Watch out, Kia Sorento!

- FORD Group Philippines is finally bringing in the much-awaited Ford Focus, which was Consumer Reports' Top Pick in the Small Sedan category while the Focus SVT was Top Pick in the Fun to Drive category. The nimble, sporty Focus will be launched here in the second quarter of 2005, but which variant—sedan or hatchback, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8 or 2.3-liter four—is still unclear. We hope Ford Group Philippines opts for the 2.3-liter, 145-hp Focus.

- GENERAL MOTORS Automobiles Philippines will field the V6 Chevrolet Lumina, Philippine version, to compete with 6-cylinder sedans such as the Toyota Camry, Honda Accord and Nissan Cefiro for market share. The Lumina was designed and developed for the Asian market and is not sold in North America or Europe.

- DAIMLERCHRYSLER, through CATS Motors Inc., will introduce the Chrysler 300C, the 5.7-liter Hemi V8 rear-wheel-drive that is currently the hottest selling big car in America. The 300C was the only passenger sedan to be chosen as a North American Car of the Year finalist, the other finalists being the Chevrolet Corvette and Ford Mustang sport coupés. By the way, next year CATS Motors, better known as the preferred dealer of Mercedes-Benz cars, will be promoted to distributor of all DaimlerChrysler vehicles.

- A new NISSAN SUV is coming in 2005, courtesy of Universal Motors Corp. (UMC), the Philippine assembler and distributor of Nissan light commercial vehicles. After the recent press briefing on UMC's 50th anniversary in the automobile industry, UMC marketing group senior vice president Elizabeth Lee told me about the forthcoming new SUV, but wouldn't reveal the model name. So let me guess: it can't be the Murano, since the Murano is a car-based crossover SUV and Nissan crossover SUVs are sold by Nissan Motor Philippines Inc. That leaves two possibilities: the all-new 2005 4.0-liter, 270-hp, DOHC V6 Pathfinder or the smaller, lower-priced Xterra, which is also all-new for 2005 and has a 4.0-liter, 255-hp, DOHC V6 powerplant. Both the Pathfinder and the Xterra are built on platforms derived from the Titan pickup truck, but the Xterra has a live rear axle while the Pathfinder has an independent rear suspension. I'm willing to bet that it will be the Xterra, which replaced the popular Nissan Terrano some years ago.

- Like UMC, ISUZU Philippines Corp. is launching a new SUV next year and like UMC's Ms Lee, Timmy Naval wouldn't say anything else.

It may be the diesel version of either the Axiom crossover or the Rodeo 4x4 compact SUV but not likely the Ascender, which is basically a rebadged Chevrolet Trailblazer. Whether it is the Axiom or the Rodeo, it will be smaller than the Trooper and will compete head-on with the Mitsubishi Montero Sport, Kia Sorento and Nissan Xterra.

- HONDA Cars Philippines Inc. (HCPI) Marketing Division deputy head Arnel Doria told me at Honda's Christmas party for the press last week that HCPI will not be introducing any new products in 2005, thus it will be a "boring year" for Honda. Perhaps Mr. Doria was joking, but he did admit that there have been many inquiries about the Odyssey, the best-selling minivan in the United States. With the Mitsubishi Grandis joining the race for sales versus the Toyota Previa, Chevrolet Venture, Kia Sedona and Hyundai Starex, will HCPI continue to stay out of the minivan market?

Other possibilities next year are the all-new 2005 Hyundai Tucson compact SUV or its twin, the 2005 Kia Sportage. The Chris Bangle-designed BMW 3 Series is definitely on its way. The face-lifted Volvo S80 and all-new 2005 Land Rover LR3, having landed in Manila during the busy Christmas season, will be greeting the New Year in showrooms.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: The trouble with the rat race is that even if you win, you're still a rat. (Lily Tomlin)

* * *

(E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph)

TOYOTA Avanza MPV

CHRYSLER 300C

Philippines gets chance to find what Discovery 3 is all about

By Charles E. Buban

ONE of the biggest challenges in building a perfect all-terrain sport utility vehicle is how to seamlessly combine off-road prowess with on-road comfort.

Most of today's go-anywhere SUVs have succeeded in achieving the first requirement but oftentimes fail miserably in giving its occupants a comfortable ride.

"I think the Land Rover Discovery 3 has resolved this conflict one normally gets in an SUV between off-road ability and on-road refinement," Wellington Soong said. "It probably does it better than anything else out there at the moment."

The Jaguar-Land Rover Philippines president and chair believes the Discovery 3 (known elsewhere as the LR3 and which replaces Land Rover's segment-defining Discovery) sets new benchmarks in design and functionality.

Terrain Response system

The Discovery 3 features Land Rover's patented Terrain Response system, which optimizes driveability and comfort as well as maximizes traction.

"The driver simply chooses one of five terrain settings via a rotary switch on the center console to accommodate a variety of road surfaces. There's a normal driving mode, one for slippery conditions (grass/gravel/snow mode) and three off-road settings (mud/ruts, sand, and rock crawl)," explained Soong.

The Terrain Response works by automatically selecting the most appropriate settings for the vehicle's advanced electronic controls and traction aids, adjusting the ride height, engine torque response, hill descent control, electronic traction control and transmission settings.

"It's like having an expert riding alongside beside you, to help you get the best out of the vehicle whatever the conditions, on-road or off," revealed Soong.

4.4-liter engine

Manufactured in England, the Discovery 3 is powered by a specially developed 4.4-liter version of Jaguar's acclaimed V8 gasoline engine (Land Rover is now part of Ford Motor Co.'s Premier Automotive Group, which also features Volvo, Jaguar and Aston Martin).

"The engine is matched to a six-speed automatic 'intelligent shift' transmission and an independent air-spring suspension with four available ride heights and automatic load leveling to enhance its on-road driving and refinement," said Soong.

Priced at P6.7 million, the Discovery 3 also features an integrated body-frame structure which, according to Soong, combines high torsional stiffness with optimal on-road capabilities and comfort.

"Its unique integrated body and frame construction uses aluminum, magnesium and Boron steel and this means, the LR3 is exceptionally light and strong," assured Soong.

First released in the UK

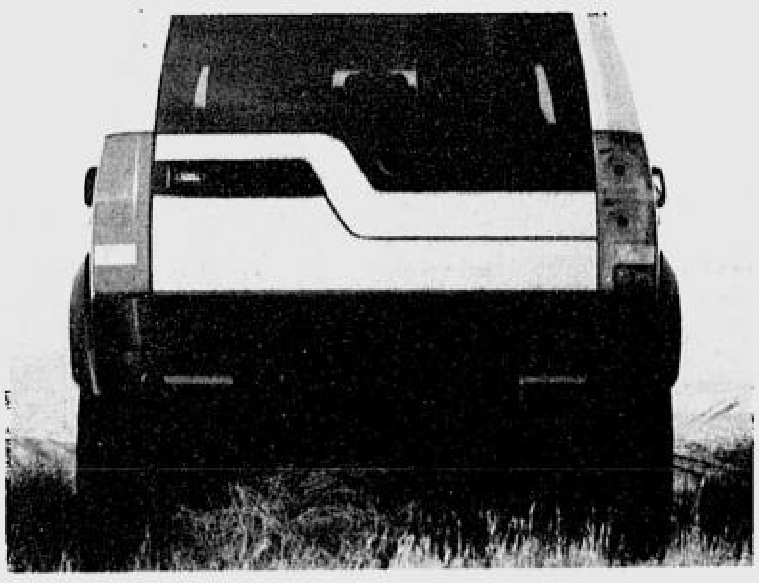
The first generation Discovery was released in the United Kingdom in October 1989 to fill the ever-widening gap between the luxurious Range Rover and the utilitarian Land Rover 90 and 110 (later known as the Defenders).

"The new Discovery 3's styling takes its cues on the last model's brutish good looks and the Range Rover's tailored shape: square front, flat rear end, the roof that has two levels, and a lot of room around the wheels. What is rather new is dipping window line on the split tailgate and the air-intake vent on the right-hand side," described Soong.

He said the priority in the Discovery 3's new design was to give the passengers and driver a superb cabin environment, with more headroom and greater comfort.

"The designer intended to make the Discovery 3 unique from the rest," Song said. "With its modern, bold and distinctive looks, no one will absolutely mistake this SUV for anything else."

DISCOVERY 3 shows how brawns and beauty can go together.



LAND Rover's best-selling model is redesigned for 2005, getting a new styling including this asymmetric rear tailgate, which operates as an easy-open clamshell for the top half and a standard tailgate for the bottom.

Traffic days are here

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

AS USUAL, the Christmas rush is on during this time of year.

The streets of Metro Manila teem with man and machine, as though everybody's cramming to buy a gift to be given to a dear one this weekend.

Balikbayans, both the first timer and old timer, continue to be amazed, if not stunned, by this phenomenon.

"And I thought our people are in abject poverty," said many a balikbayan who strayed into malls and saw thousands grappling with that cold, if not cruel, reality: In wealth or in want, we gotta give.

Such is the culture of the Filipino that it elects to close its eyes if only to show love and concern to a loved one, the neighbor and even to a complete stranger.

The family vehicle has never been that busy, whether for use by our balikbayan-relatives traveling here and forth, or by family members out on a stroll at the crowded park, a trip to Tagaytay or Baguio or to the province, or a visit to the mall to both cool off frayed nerves caused by traffic and buy anything that could be of value come gift-sharing time on Dec. 24 or Dec. 25.

As we love to say, "Only in da Pilipins."

* * *

In a recent news report filed in Singapore, the Honda Civic and CR-V have topped the JD Powers IQS (Initial Quality Study) survey. It said that both vehicles recorded the fewest initial quality problems in their respective segments, according to the J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2004.

The study measured vehicle quality during the first two to six months of ownership and is based on evaluations from more than 1,200 new-vehicle owners.

The study focused on 135 problem areas affecting quality across nine IQS categories: ride, handling and braking; features and controls; seats; heating, ventilation and cooling (HVAC); sound system; vehicle exterior; vehicle interior; transmission; and engine. The overall model performance is summarized as the number of problems reported per 100 vehicles (PP100).

Honda Civic retains its top position in the midsize segment, with a score of 71 PP100. The Civic records the fewest problems in four of the nine problem categories measured in the IQS, namely features and controls, sound system, vehicle exterior and transmission.

On features and controls, and transmission, Honda Civic tied with the Toyota Corolla Altis.

Honda CR-V led the SUV segment with an IQS score of 68 PP100. Honda CR-V's strong performance is driven by industry-leading scores in the ride, handling and braking, features and controls, vehicle exterior and transmission categories.

Again, my kabaleyan Arnel and his chief angels, Tin Tin and Sheryl, not to mention Takano-san, deserve a tap in the back.

* * *

Here's a letter from Chito Vecina, one of the nation's renowned photographers, whose one distinctive talent that has become the envy of his peers is his wedding photography.

"Dear Mr. Mendoza:

"I write to ventilate to you a sad experience.

"I bought a Starex GRX 2004 model last October 2004 at Hyundai Alabang. The sales person said the GRX 2004 model is the answer to my search for a fuel-efficient van, saying the GRX 2004 consumes less gas than the Club 2003 model.

"I must admit I was 'sweet talked' into buying it. The vehicle consumes one liter of diesel per 5 km. The Starex Club 2003 that I had test-driven a week before I bought the Starex GRX 2004 consumes less gas (about 10 km/liter).

"After pointing this out to Hyundai Alabang, they said Starex GRX 2004 is not a fuel-efficient van in that it was specifically designed for European consumption centering on environmental friendliness rather than fuel efficiency.

"I was furious because they lied to me.

"Hyundai Alabang tried twice to rectify the problem, but to no avail.

Thank you very much for your assistance and more power!"

I tried calling up Hyundai Alabang but I was unsuccessful. A response from your side, fellas, will be highly appreciated.

* * *

Congratulations to the winners of the Fourth Henry Ford Awards, among them my neighbor here, Aida Sevilla-Mendoza, and Vernon B. Sarne (two prizes) of the Manila Times. Also, a toast to Erle Sebastian of Today for running away with the top honors in the newly introduced Nissan Best Story Awards. "I didn't know it pays to be hard-hitting," said Erle, raising his San Mig light to me, after receiving his prize.

Merry Christmas to one and all!

* * *

QUOTE ME. In these traffic-prone days of the year, fill 'er up always to avoid hassles when suddenly caught in a vehicle jam.

BMW announced a 7 to 8 percent retail price increase on BMW 3 Series models starting next year.

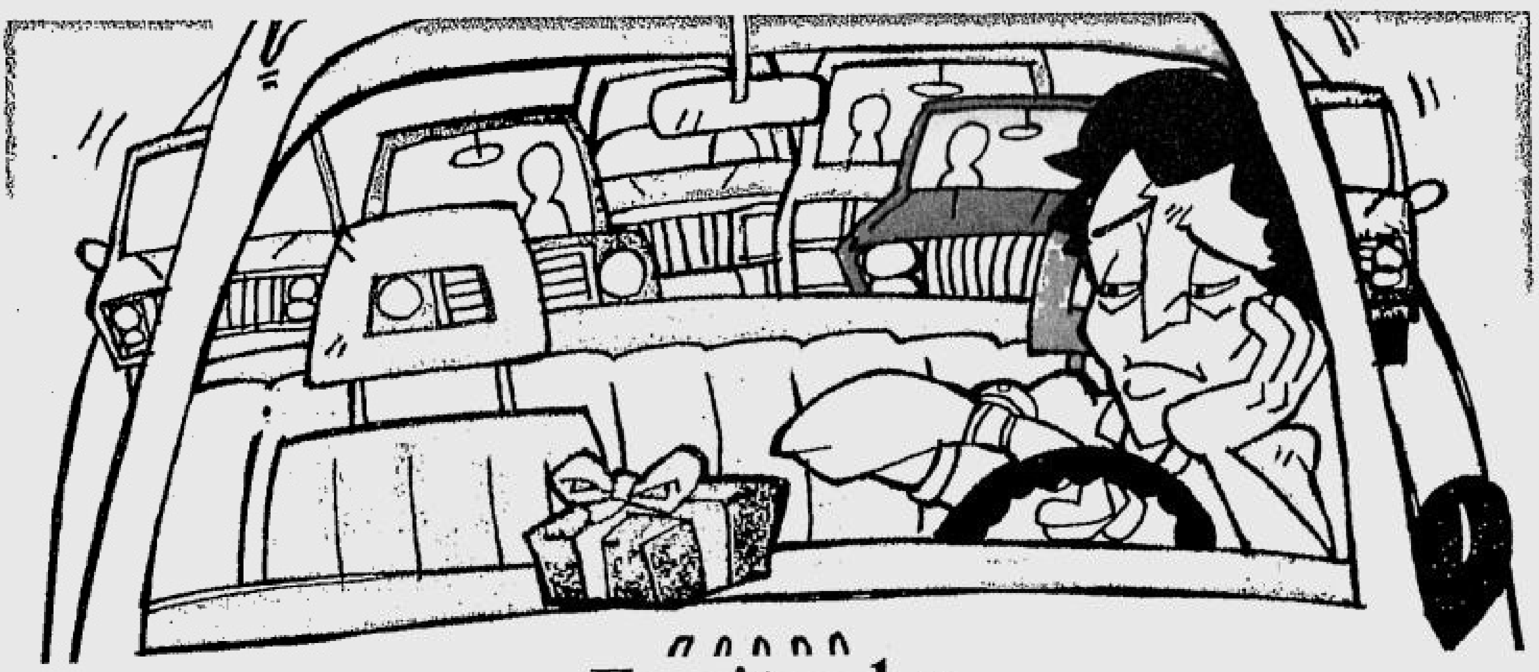
BMW to increase retail prices

BMW Philippines Corp. has announced that it will increase its suggested retail prices next year, due to the development of the currency exchange between the peso and the euro. In a first step, BMW will increase the retail prices of selected variants of its best-selling model, the BMW 3 Series, by seven to eight percent effective Jan. 1, 2005.

Customers can avail of BMW's current prices until the end of the year, and likewise take advantage of innovative ownership incentives on the BMW 3 Series, from 0 percent interest plans on a 25 percent down payment for as much as four years, to complementary five-year service inclusive packages.

With these special offers, the multi-awarded BMW 3 Series is now available at the best value ever.

Customers can also benefit from other easy purchase options, such trade-in packages and preferential cash deals, available at all authorized BMW dealers.



Fruitcake

By Andre Palma

COMMENTARY

CHRISTMAS to me means fruitcake. It is the gift that keeps on giving, especially in my household, as I find no use for it other than as a recycled token for last-minute inclusions in my gift list. It is unnatural for me as a Filipino to eat fruitcake. Eating it must be part and parcel of the entire greeting card holiday, snowed-in, log-cabin theme abroad, as I can see it going really well with eggnog, toboggans and frostbite. Unfortunately, this media battered yuletide image has given us, tropical Filipinos, the uncomfortable spiced sweetness of moist fruitcake.

Monstrous traffic

This season of recycling fruitcake also brings us monstrous traffic. In my many years as a driver, I have tried to understand why Christmas brings our streets to a standstill. Is it because everyone is headed for the mall to do their holiday shopping? This theory might have held true in the past, when malls were few and far between, but in a cityscape littered with malls, there is no need for us all to congregate in a singular place to worship the gods of credit and conspicuous consumption.

Does traffic come to a halt because of the pretty lights and decorations that festoon our roads during the season? Though they mercifully serve as eye-relief from the rippling sea of red rear brake lights that we must face during our daily commutes home; none really have any sort of traffic-stopping quality that a bikini-clad model on a billboard has. There is also the urban legend of the traffic enforcer's Christmas party, rumored to always occur during the payday Friday's before the 25th. Amid the prospect of dealing with irate drivers, who've probably just blown their 13th month pay on gifts for their *inaanaks* (godchildren), who can blame the enforcers for wanting to disappear on that inauspicious date?

Lack of space

There is no easy, catch-all explanation for the traffic phenomenon during December. Let's just face the fact that during the yuletide season, an unusual and unexplained number of vehicles use our already overburdened roads and wreak havoc on our schedules and holiday spirit.

The undeniably lack of space results in vehicular congestion, slow brain-numbing travel speeds, and fender-benders that produce flared tempers, increased driver stress and some dramatic road-rage incidents. Couple this with our reputation for being some of the worst drivers when it comes to disciplined, responsible commuter driving.

To put things in perspective, some multinational corporations hire one of the country's best touring car racers to teach the staff how to drive defensibly in Manila traffic. Imagine, what we take for granted on a daily basis as an unavoidable hassle of city living is actually deemed by some as a hostile environment to travel in. Multiply this by the factor of the holiday traffic problems and the situation can be seen as potentially dangerous.

2 finite resources

What seems to be a chaotic influx of cars can only be met by two finite resources, our road network and our patience. In gridlock traffic, the singular space you lose to merging traffic is not going to make a dramatic difference in travel time. In fact, allowing traffic to flow smoothly, even at a 20 kilometer an hour crawl will do wonders to the traffic situation on our main roads. Stop and go traffic is a physically arduous task and at the same time completely inefficient when it comes to fuel consumption.

Having to accelerate rapidly to close the gap and not allow merging traffic get ahead of you only increases the use of fuel. Let's keep unnecessary travel to a minimum. If you must join the tens of thousands of cars creeping their way to the mall for a little last-minute shopping, make the most of the trip. Coordinate trips with friends and family. Meet at a central location, leave your cars in a secure place and use public transportation.

Every car that can be kept off the streets of Metro Manila directly translates into more road space for everyone and less congestion. I ask all of the motorists out there to try something new. In a move that will surely be as unnatural to us Filipinos as fruitcake, let's practice some restraint and generosity while driving this holiday season. It is such a small thing to show self-discipline on Philippine roads, whereas the benefits we reap from it could be great.

For comments, e-mail the author at scandyflick@yahoo.com

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SR 1.8 GAS A/T	896,000	100,000	67,342	46,416	36,782	26,500	21,622	18,335	17,196
GSX 2.0 GAS A/T	847,000	100,000	62,921	43,370	34,371	24,763	20,205	17,131	16,067
GLX 1.8 GAS A/T	807,000	90,000	60,215	41,505	32,895	23,699	19,337	16,395	15,376
GL 1.8 GAS M/T	698,000	80,000	51,500	35,349	28,023	20,189	16,473	13,963	13,096
DLX 2.4 DSL M/T	690,000	80,000	53,242	36,698	29,063	20,938	17,084	14,496	13,596
DLX 1.8 GAS M/T (12.07%)	663,000	80,000	48,583	33,173	26,301	18,948	15,460	13,103	12,290
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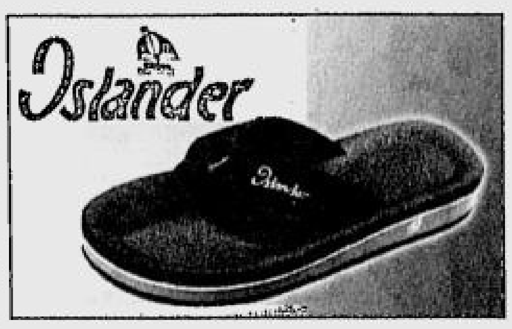


Christmas scrapbook

Christmas is the perfect excuse to be kind. Christmas is a time for love. And heartbreak. Christmas is a time for crazy coincidences. It's a canvas for fate. Christmas does not make us immune to death. Christmas is rife with loneliness and pain. Christmas is a time for hellos. Christmas is a time for goodbyes. Christmas awakens our desire to make wishes. Christmas is a moment for firsts. Christmas can make dreams come true. Christmas is a chance to celebrate our relationships. Christmas can teach us lessons. Christmas is the opportunity to appreciate everyone around us.. Christmas is a time for giving—and forgiving. Christmas is an adventure. Christmas is a time for believing. This is Christmas, according to our correspondents, readers and friends

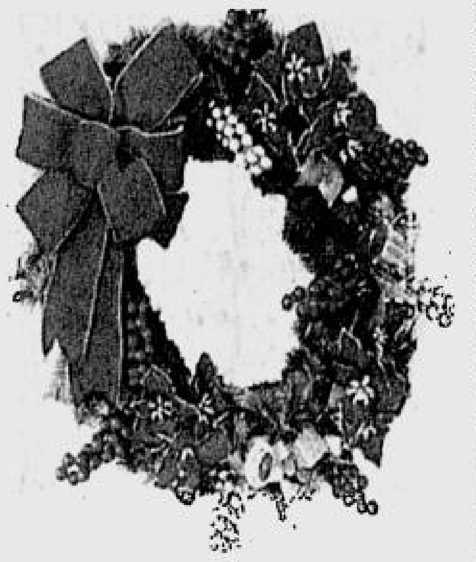
Exchange of gifts

MY BOYFRIEND Hector and I celebrated our first Chirstmas in 2002. We were as excited as any new couple waiting for their first Christmas.

Both of us were secretly fishing for what we wanted for each other for Christmas. Mall after mall, *tiangge* after *tiangge*, we searched for our respective first Christmas gifts to each other as a couple.

I saw a lot of things he would appreciate—sports caps, muscle shirts, bracelets. But nothing was right in my eyes. While others shopped for the most expensive Christmas present, I was looking for something different, something he would never forget.

And so after crossing out many items on my gift idea list, I found what I was looking for inside a craft store. It was something very simple. I wrapped it in a most creative way and put it under the Christmas tree.



We exchanged our gifts on the day of Paskuhan 2002 (a traditional Christmas celebration at University of Santo Tomas). He handed me two gift bags. Waiting is really not my thing, so I took a quick peek.

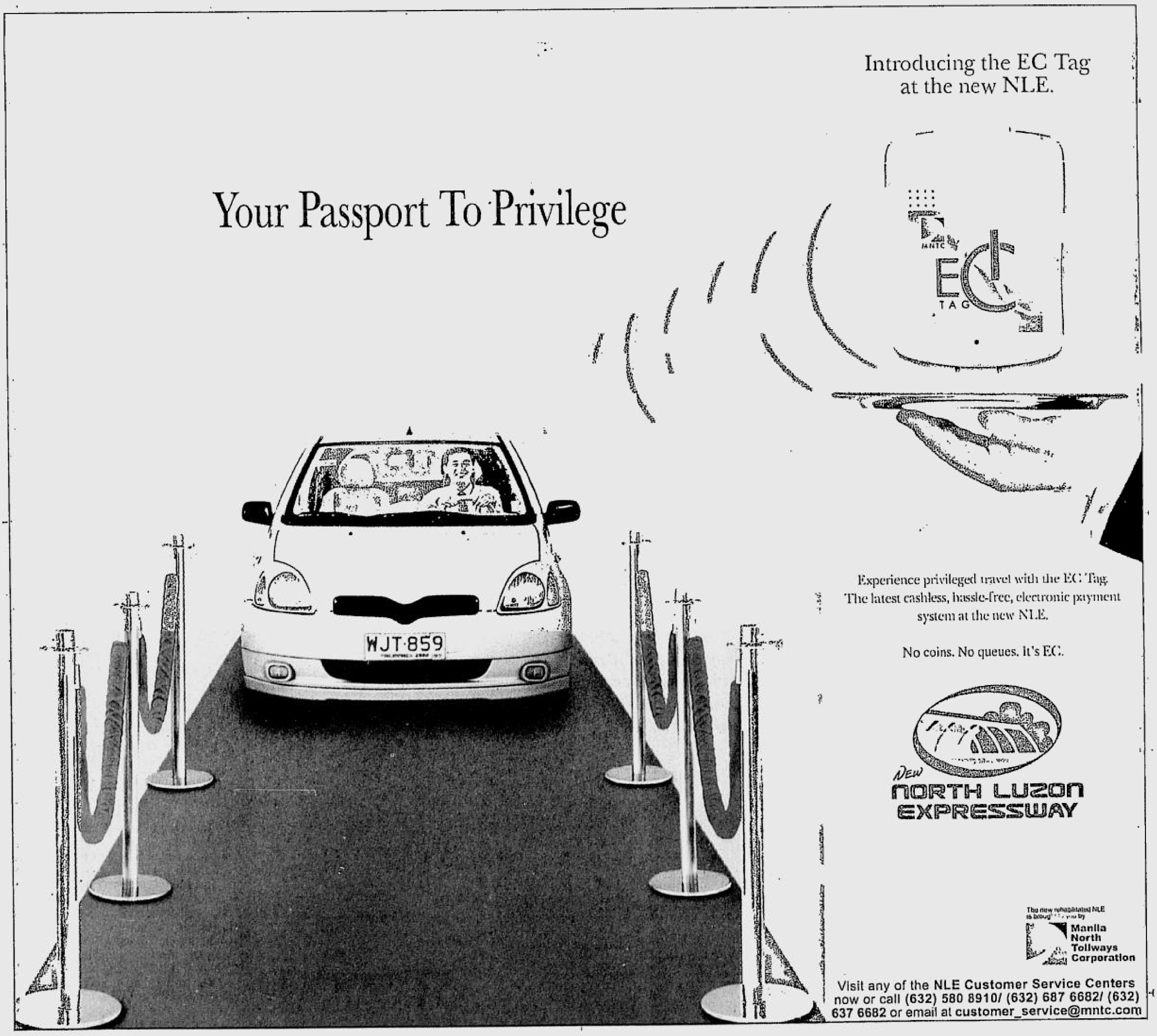
But I opened the two bags inside the car on my way home. All I could say was, "Oh, my God." Inside was a diary with his favorite love poem, "How Do I Love Thee," by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, printed on the first page.

I couldn't believe the coincidence, because guess what was inside the gift box I had given him in exchange? A diary which I found in a paper store, with my favorite biblical love quote on its first page. It came with a red Parker pen with our nicknames engraved on it.

He said he felt the same way I did when he opened his gift. But wait, there was more. The next morning, while slicing the cake that he bought for me, I struck something hard at the bottom of the plate.

Imagine my astonishment when I saw that it was a silver pen wrapped in aluminum foil. On it, my name and his were engraved.

Our first Christmas gifts to each other were so memorable, they will always remind us of our love for each other and the life we're sharing together.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Dance with my father

By Hanna, 23, Baguio City

"IF I could have another chance/ another walk, another dance with them/ I'll play a song that would never, never end/ 'coz I'd love, love, love, to dance with my father again."

The night of Dec. 7 was one of those rare moments when I succumbed to another attack of loneliness and sheer longing for someone I could never see and spend Christmas with once again, no matter how hard I try to will him back to my life: my dad.

It was like a dam bursting open. My tears just flowed freely amid convulsions, and, for once, I didn't dare hold back the rush of pain that I had hoarded inside me for a long time.

The culprit were the lines from the song that filled the air after I sang along to "You Should Know by Now." I was able to reach the high note! Good job, I was telling myself as I was waiting for the next song.

I was still feeling giddy when the intro to "Dance with my Father" began. Oh no, not again. I wanted to turn off the radio, but I knew the struggle to remain oblivious to the memories of my daddy would be futile. So I ended up weeping uncontrollably.

For the nth time, I chided myself for crying whenever I would hear this song. But I just couldn't help it. Anyone who saw me happy one minute and in tears the next would have thought I was crazy.

Well, maybe I am. Ever since my dad left us five years ago, I've often felt as if I've been robbed of a bit of my sanity.

Nothing was just the same without Dad. If not for my mom, I would have been a goner, too, by now.

No one really knows what I feel, because every time my yearning for Dad threatens to get the worst of me, I try to exude an everything-is-fine-I-am-okay-I-will-survive spirit.

The people around me just don't see that, for five years now, whenever December arrives, I construct another world where Dad is still present: his scent, his tobacco, his penetrating look, his work-stained hands, his bony figure clad in his usual getup of white tee shirt and basketball shorts—I try to relive them during these times.

Even if it tears my heart into pieces, I create a picture of him in my mind and try to believe that he'd be there waiting for me when I arrive from the city.

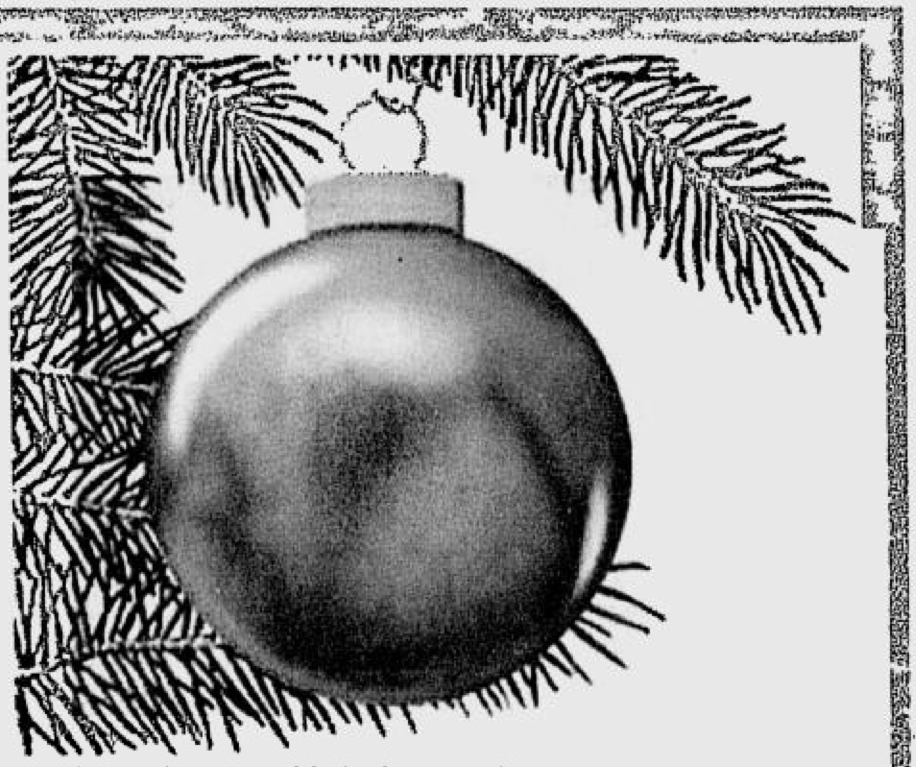
His image will always be imprinted in my mind: freshly bathed, seated on his favorite bench under the mango tree he had planted and groomed himself, smoking cigars, his eyeglasses perched almost perfectly on his note to get a good sight of me as I walked up the road.

Coming home was always one of my favorite activities. But not anymore.

Then, right after *simbang gabi*, I'd rush home to taste everything that Dad had prepared: barbecue, hotdogs, cheese and homemade pastries, the main courses consisting of *nilagang baka*, whole oven-toasted chicken, spaghetti, pancit and God knows what else.

Yes, I can only fall in love with a man like him who can create magic in the kitchen and come out with delectable dishes, not to mention also singing delightfully while cooking and downing bottles of beer at the same time.

For me, Dad was the best Kapampangan cook ever. Even without the latest kitchen equipment, he could turn a simple *salu-salo* into a grand feast. In our home, he was the master of the kitchen, and every one else in the house was just too glad to oblige him.



On Christmas eve, while we savored the feast, my dad, already tipsy, would look for my mom, who'd be mingling with my *titas*, cousins and other visitors, and pull her to the center of our *lola*'s front yard.

There they would dance. It was always quite a scene—one of those memories I'd treasure in my heart for as long as I live.

Later on, I would join them in a tight hug, and feel their love envelop me.

This was my kind of Christmas. But it's something I can never experience anymore.

"I know I'm praying for much too much/ But could you send back the only man she loved/ I know you don't do it usually/ But dear Lord she's dying/ To dance with my father again/ Every night I fall asleep and this is all I ever dream..."

The season that never was

By Edmund

IT was the first day of December, and I felt like logging on to chat to meet a new friend. I hardly use the Internet to meet new people, but I must admit it's the easiest, considering you don't have to get out of the house at all.

So I was in this chat room and started checking out random names that interested me. Sure enough, I got some responses here and there while others just ignored my private messages.

I was about to log off when one girl answered back. We began chatting about trivial stuff and, by 2 a.m., we got to know each other's real names and exchanged phone numbers.

She asked if she could add me to her buddy list. I said, why not. She seemed nice and genuine. And we had a lot of things in common.

We spent the hours laughing ourselves silly. I even get to read her Friendster profile and her friends' testimonials, which she likewise did with mine.

I became so interested to know more and more about her that, after that, I didn't even bother entering other chat rooms. For about two weeks, we became regular chatmates, and I was feeling giddy all the time.

But then came the inauspicious date. It was Monday the 13th, but you could say it was Friday. Now that I look back, it had the same ungodly ring to it.

I was online 10 minutes ahead of her. It was past midnight when I heard the "knock" and saw that she was online. I felt better because I was feeling a bit depressed that day and I had no one to talk to.

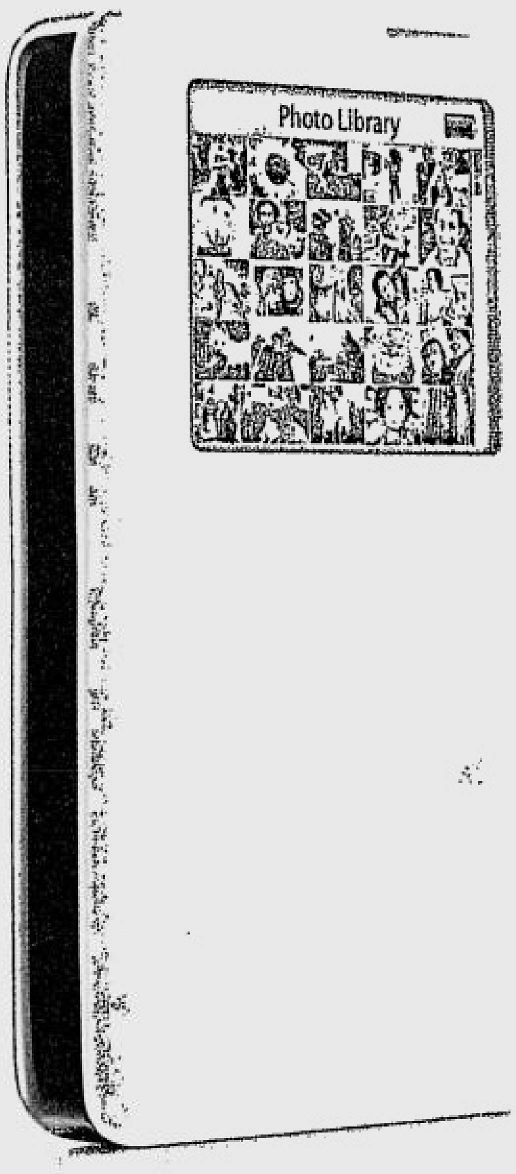
Well, she was depressed too, she said. Wasn't that weird? What were the odds of that happening, right? Two people slowly getting comfortable with each other and falling into a funk at the same time. Hmmm, there must be something there.

Alas, what she told me completely took me by surprise. Turned out she hadn't gotten over a recently ended relationship, and she was feeling blue with Christmas just around the corner.

That killed me. Although it was uncomfortable for me, I let her know that I was there for her. But underneath my nonchalant exterior, any hope I had for our relationship to blossom beyond the Internet seemed a long shot.

My timing couldn't have been more impeccable. She said she wasn't up to taking another risk so soon. Which just made me more depressed, and I couldn't help but cry. Stupid, I know. But that's just me—a fool for love.

Now, guess I'll just be another name on her buddy list. It sure feels like Christmas all over again.



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HOME ALONE

By Paolo Lorenzana

I WAS woozy when I woke up that morning. It was 10 a.m. of Christmas Eve, and I realized I would be spending Christmas alone, since my family was to attend my sister's wedding in California and my Visa expired months earlier.

I had felt different just a few days ago. In a way, it was liberating being away from my entire family this Christmas. The holidays had ceased to be a warm-and-fuzzy time of the year for me since I hit puberty, and my family had become too jaded to care about the holidays.

At 19, I was the youngest in my family of eight and the entire clan of cousins, and alienation was always a part of family functions, especially during the holidays.

I promised myself that this Christmas would be different. I already had plans. I would drive around, get take-out, read a good book, watch a ton of rented movies and enjoy the company of friends. Yes, this Christmas would be different.

Separate

Late afternoon, I took a drive through Ortigas, taking advantage of the bright weather. The city was celebrating, with buntings and all, and I felt separate from everything.

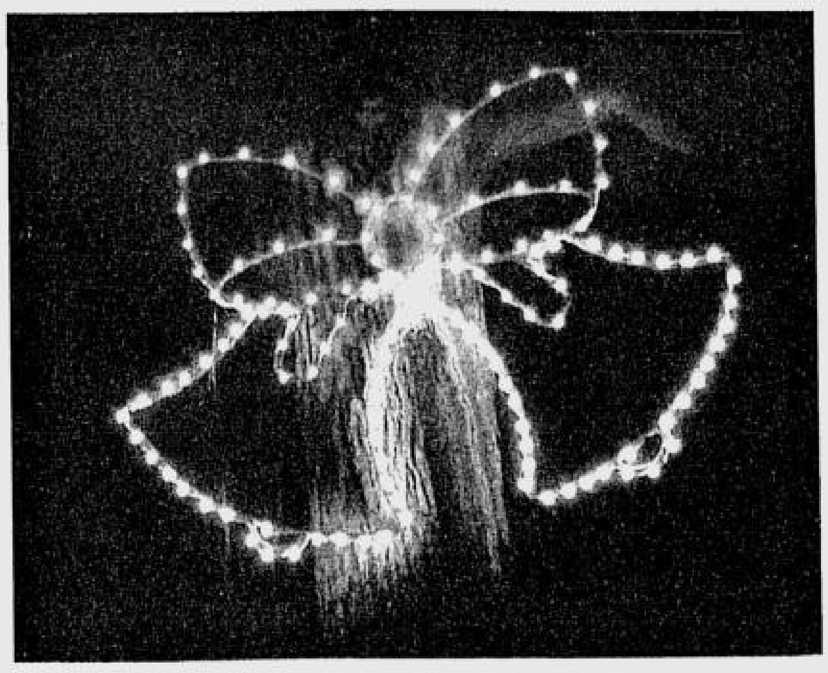
The bustle of Christmas Eve was not as intense as I thought it would be. Yet there were, of course, people scurrying around in the mall doing last-minute compulsive shopping for their loved ones and families.

The weather had changed from sunny to dismal gray as I drove home, a rock song singing the words "Merry Christmas, I could care less" on the radio.

After a long dreamless nap that lasted until evening, I found myself at a friend's party thinking that the alcoholic atmosphere and house music pumping from a stereo would alleviate the emptiness within. Yet I was more miserable than ever, and led me to the prospect of going home and sleeping the holidays off.

After two cigarettes and a bottle of beer, I bid my friends a somber Merry Christmas and left.

I rode the elevator to the floor of my family's condominium with a family of four probably coming home from their Christmas dinner. The two children, a boy and a girl who were around the ages of 4 and 5, seemed sleepy.



I was alone on the top of a building on Christmas Day. I began to long for everything about my family

I looked at the family longingly and watched them exit the elevator in the floor below mine. Instead of getting off at my floor, I let the elevator take me to the building's rooftop.

Christmas lights were all I needed, I told myself. The mere sight of them would cheer me up.

Large step

I thought about that one Christmas when our family decided to decorate our old house with lights. It was a large step for us since our house would always be the black spot in our brightly lit village during Christmas. For that one Christmas, however, I felt like I was a part of something; that our family was just like any other family.

From the rooftop, I could see families in their condominiums watching television with one another, families eating god-awful fruit cake and a street below almost bare because everyone was somewhere.

And I was alone on the top of a building on Christmas day. I began to long for everything about my family, no matter how dysfunctional or inept we were at showing our affection toward one another.

I began to realize that no one can escape Christmas and that beneath all its shortcomings is the oft-buried comfort that only family can give.

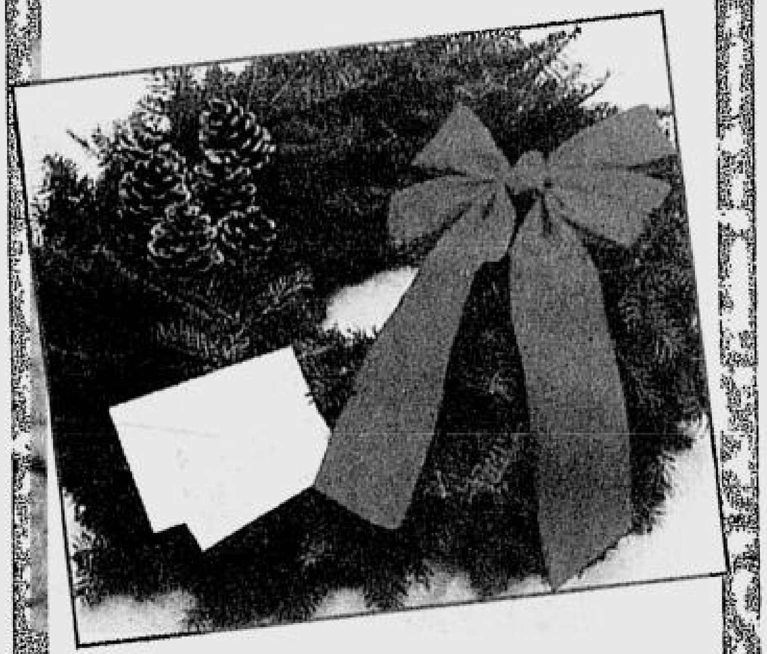
At home, I wanted so much to speak to my family, to be with them for the holidays.

I'd call my sister as soon as I woke up and tell her how much I wanted to see her walking down the aisle. I'd greet my family the first sincere "Merry Christmas" I'd ever said. I'd do all these as soon as I woke up.

Family

As my head sunk between two cushions and my eyes grew heavy and slowly begun to close, I could see my family sitting together in Carmel, chilly, yet smiling and enjoying each other's company.

I mouthed the words "Merry Christmas," while Dave Matthews' song lulled me to sleep: "Father up above, why in all this hatred do you fill me up with love love love... and the blood of our children all around."



1988

By James Lopez

IT'S DEC. 24, 1988
T'was a snowy evening and the time was late
My mother and I were in Boston
Alone in the corner of a desolate train station
Father was coming my mother said
I tried to stay awake coz I was so excited
I was only three by the time he left
So many nights with him I never slept
Wonder if I could still do the same
Could I still kiss him as soon as he came?
I was so excited that I thought of the next days
With my father I'd play till New Year's Day
I looked at mama and she was crying
Why was she crying if my father was coming?
I saw that her heart was in vain
The tears in her eyes kept me wonderin'
I decided to be quiet and hold my word
For I knew that mama wouldn't say a word
But I never expected that soon I would find
The answer to the question in my mind
When I looked toward the north, I saw the train
I heard the whistle blowing, I knew Father was coming
"Your father will be here in a minute or more...
But don't expect a happy Christmas like we had before."
We went to the last coach and we went in
But nobody was sitting there
All I saw was a coffin sealed in one corner
In its cover deeply engraved was the name that read
PETER
Mother embraced me as she uttered these words
The words with sobs that shook my world:
"Your father is home, my dearest son
But his life, his spirit, forever is gone."
As I stepped down the train I looked up to the sky
Snow kept falling and the air was dry
I bowed my head as we walked away
Tears ran down my cheeks as I softly said:
"Pa, thanks for coming home on Christmas Day..."

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"On the fir

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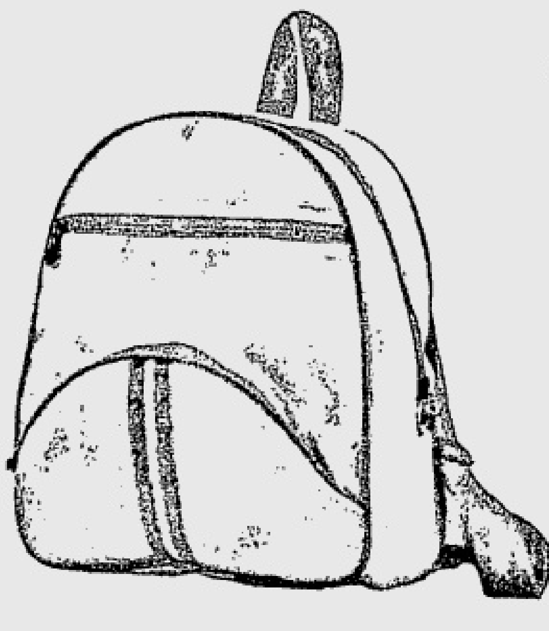

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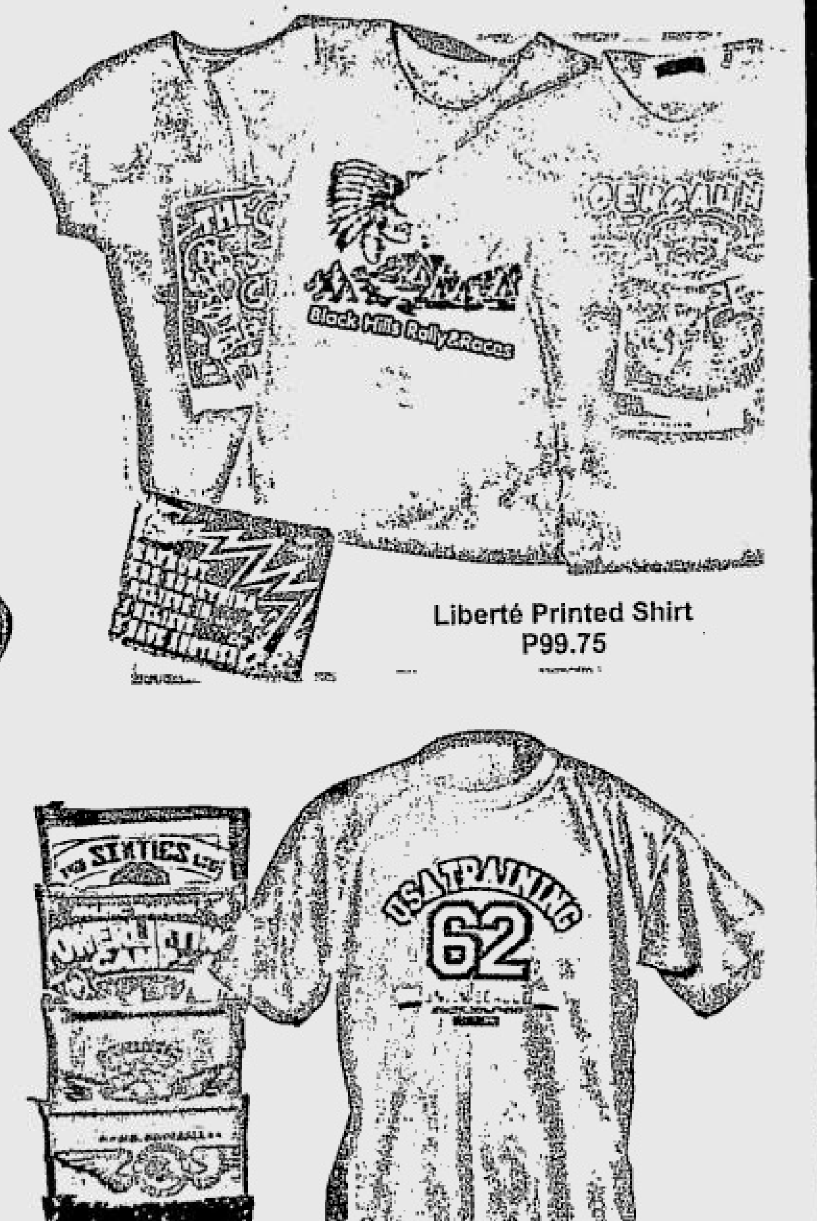

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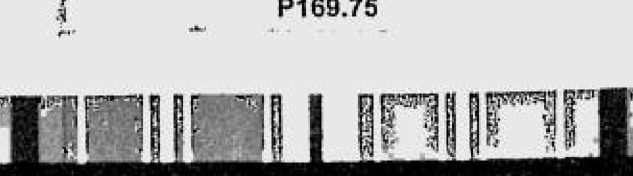

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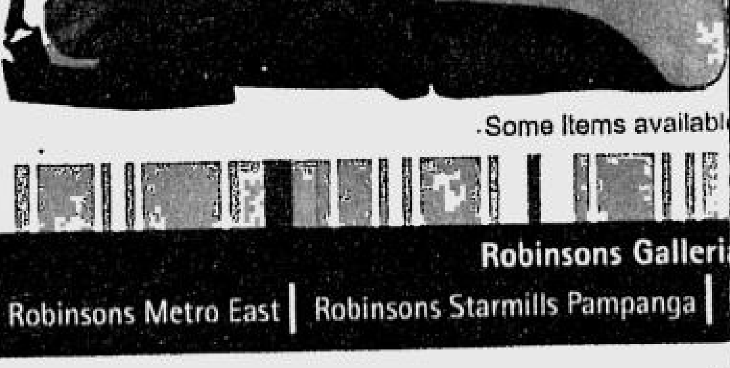

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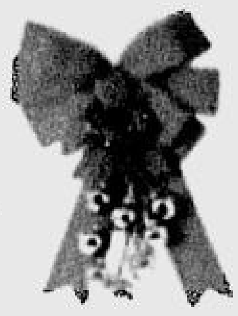

t day of Christmas my true love gave to me..."

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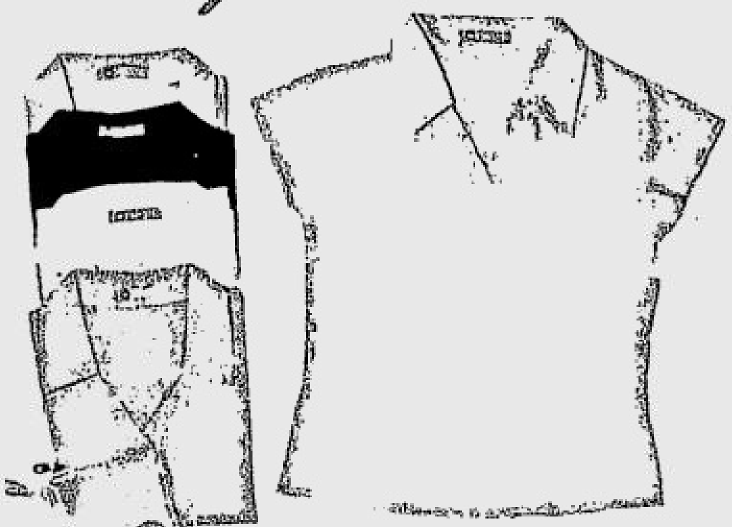

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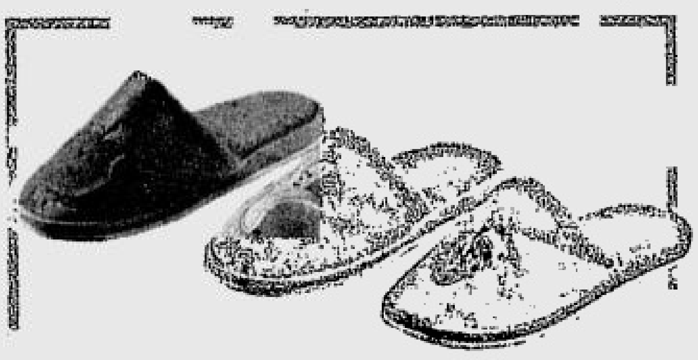

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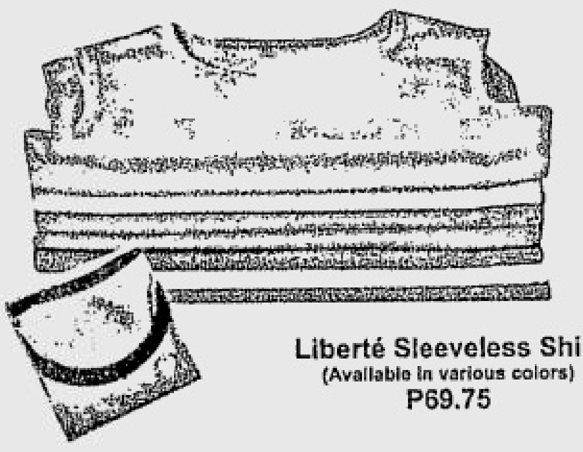

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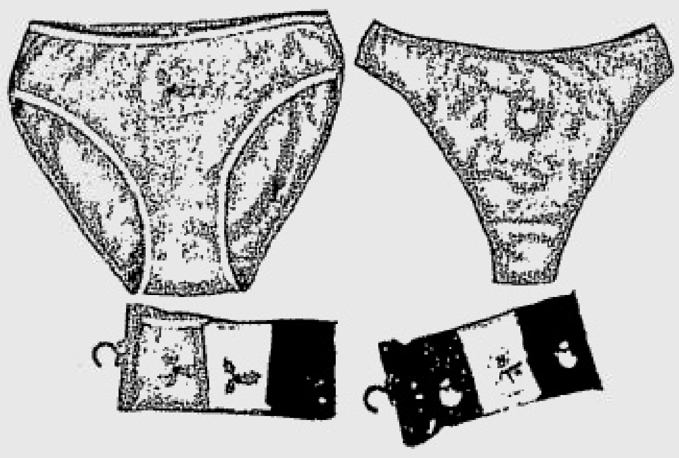

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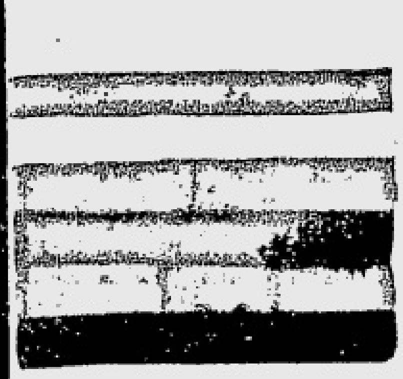

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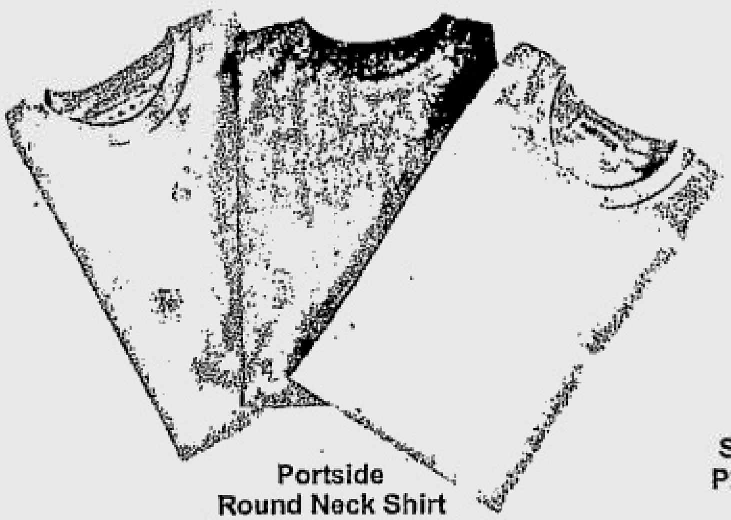

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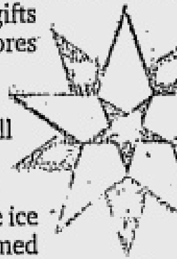
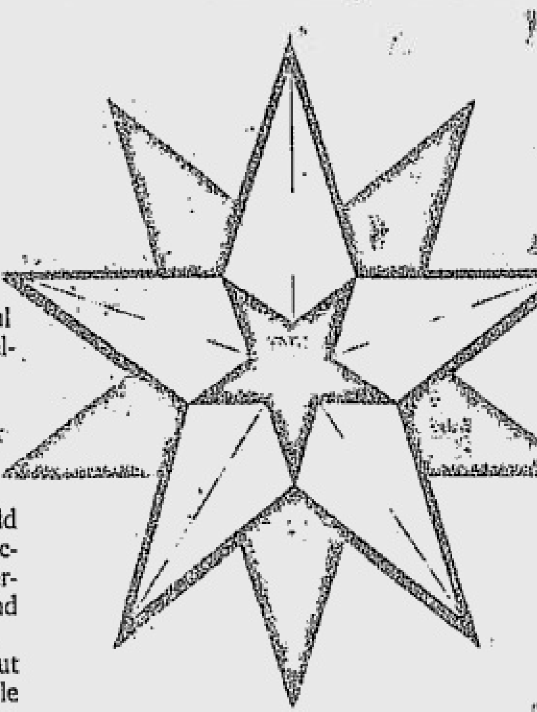
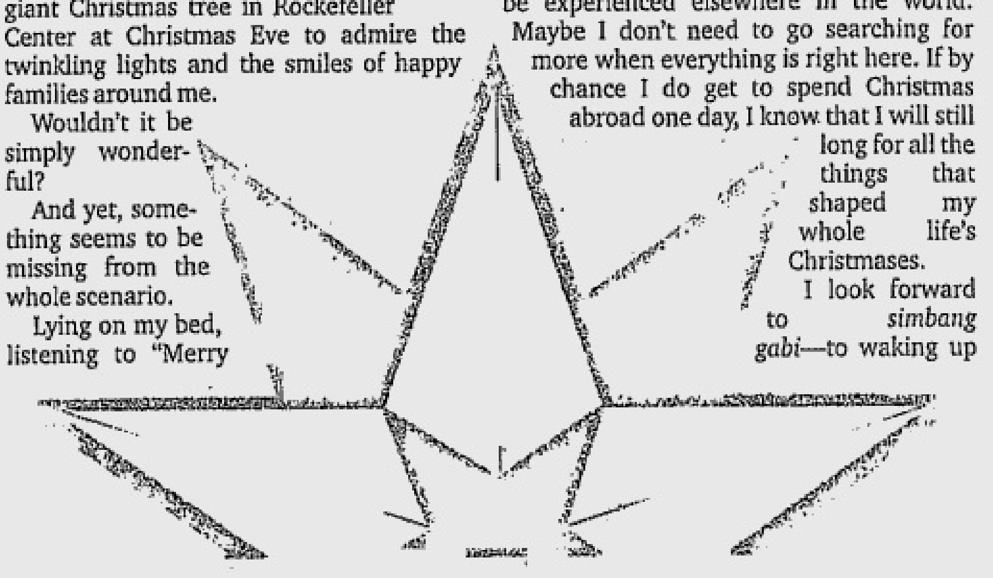
Dreaming of a white Christmas

. . . and having the true Christmas right here in my beloved Philippines

By Samantha Ang
2bU! Correspondent







I HAVE always wanted to experience Christmas in New York.

After watching "Home Alone 2," "Serendipity," and countless shows with Christmas scenes set in the Big Apple, I couldn't help but fantasize what it would be like spending the holidays there. In the movies, everyone seemed so warm and joyful that you wouldn't think of spending Christmas in any other place. I imagined it to be perfect.

I could already picture the scenario. There would be snow, of course. I would be sitting in some chic café, sipping hot chocolate watching frenzied shoppers rush by with their paper bags filled with gifts in shiny wrappers. All the big stores would be decked with elaborate displays of lights and decorations, and Christmas carols fill the air.

Then, I would take a stroll along Central Park and watch the ice skaters or stand in front of the famed giant Christmas tree in Rockefeller Center at Christmas Eve to admire the twinkling lights and the smiles of happy families around me.

Wouldn't it be simply wonderful?

And yet, something seems to be missing from the whole scenario.

Lying on my bed, listening to "Merry Christmas, Darling" blasting out from our neighbor's Christmas party, I pondered how something supposedly as joyful as a Christmas song, could also evoke a feeling of loneliness. Suddenly, it hit me.

Family. Friends. Loved ones.

With that realization, my notion of that perfect White Christmas ceased to exist. Would Rachel Green be as blissful without her friends on Christmas Eve? Would Macaulay Culkin (a.k.a. Kevin McCallister) and his family have a merry Christmas if they didn't find one another?

After all, it isn't so much about the place than it is the people we're celebrating Christmas with. Besides, we, too, have our own Christmas traditions that could not be experienced elsewhere in the world. Maybe I don't need to go searching for more when everything is right here. If by chance I do get to spend Christmas abroad one day, I know that I will still long for all the things that shaped my whole life's Christmases.

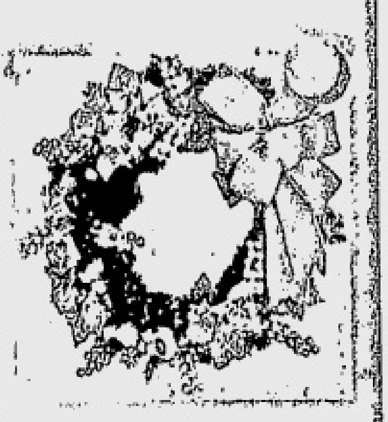
I look forward to *simbang gabi*—to waking up early once again and hearing Mass in our festive church; to my high school class reunion and the trip to Enchanted Kingdom with the *barkada* to watch the fireworks; to driving by streets adorned with *parols*, dancing Santas, and beautifully lit gardens; to hearing local Christmas songs on air, and even "Ocho Ocho" made to sound like one; to jostling with human traffic at *bangketas*; to overloading myself with holiday treats; to gift-giving (and receiving!), and really, plenty of others.

Most of all, I'm looking forward our annual Noche Buena. There is truly nothing in the world that compares to that experience on Christmas Eve. We'll be hearing Mass at midnight to celebrate Jesus' birth and be going to my grandmother's house afterward to bond, feast, and bask in the company of close relatives. As always, there would be lots of laughter and love.

Yes… perfect.

My wish list

By Ma. Cristina P. Alcaraz



NOVEMBER 17, 2004

It's not so uncommon for people to make wish lists for themselves, especially on Christmas. But just to be different, I figured why not make a wish list for everybody else but me?

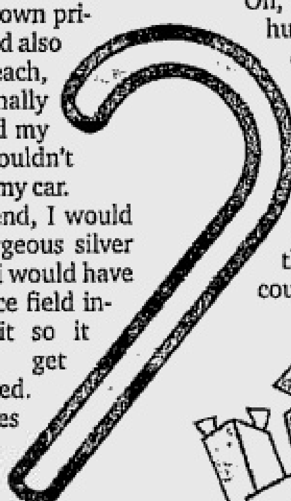
I haven't been lucky in my quest for the perfect job, thus my penniless state. And so, I'm left wondering where I will get the money to buy gifts for the people I love.

But let's say we're living in a perfect world, and I have a limitless amount of money to spend. What would I give?

For my father, I'd get collared shirts of every color imaginable, because he loves those so much. And if I could possibly buy it back, I would also love to give him the ability to move his right side again.

For my mother, I would give her all the prettiest Murano beads money can buy and a credit card that never maxes out and pays for itself, so she can stop worrying about our bills.

For my brothers, I would build a new house with a room for each of them, so they'll have their own private space. I would also give them a car each, so they can finally learn to drive and my older brother wouldn't have to settle for my car.



For my boyfriend, I would get him that gorgeous silver car in "I, Robot." I would have some kind of force field installed around it so it won't ever get scratched or dented.

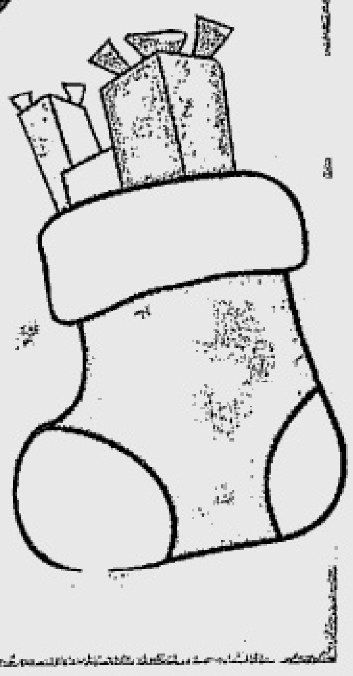
For my relatives and those I consider my family, I would give each of them airplane tickets to go wherever they would want to go. I have a lot of relatives who have already moved halfway across the world, and it would be great if all of us could get together again, even if only for Christmas.

For my great friends, I would give all of them a blank check, which they can sign with any amount that they wish. That way, they can get whatever they want and not settle for some randomly picked gift from a health and beauty store, which is what everyone usually gets for everyone else.

For the very first organization I joined in college, UP Quill, I would give it enough money to be able to publish folios for every semester of the next 10 years. That way, they can keep the love for literature alive among students.

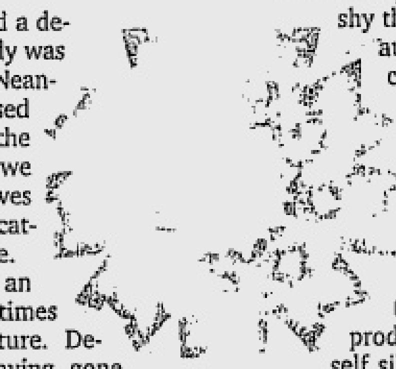
For the organization I keep on coming back to, the UP StreetDance Club,. I would give it its very own spacious dance studio, with a built-in theater that can house more than a thousand people, so it won't have to worry about renting a costly venue for its performances.

Oh, but please don't hunt me down the day after Christmas if none of these things get delivered to your doorstep. As they say, it's always the thought that counts.



Kicked out on Christmas

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent



LAST year, when my girlfriend refused to obey her older sister and sell Kiki the family poodle, she got kicked out of the house. With nowhere else to go, we decided to live with my relatives.

The family house had a detached room that nobody was using, plus a separate Neanderthal comfort room used by the maids. While the room became ours, we were told by my relatives to use the bathrooms located inside the main house.

Now my girlfriend is an extremely (and sometimes annoyingly) shy creature. Despite knowing and having gone out with my relatives before, she remained shy and detached, opting to go out of the house or just stay inside our room.

She was so shy that we had to leave the house early for lunch at the malls, have dinner somewhere else and go home late enough so that everyone would be asleep by the time we arrived.

And during the rare times when we were at home and were invited for a meal, I had to lie and tell my relatives we already ate somewhere else.

My girlfriend was so shy and uncomfy about the whole setup that she wore her Sunday best clothes everyday.

She was so shy and overly conscious that she didn't want to step inside the main house despite invitations. She was so shy that no matter how angry and authoritative I tried to be, she chose to use the maids' comfort room instead of the ones inside the main house.

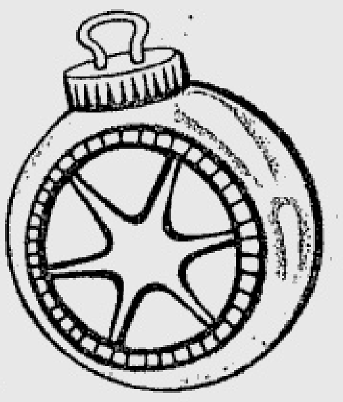
During Noche Buena, my girlfriend ate with me and my relatives, but just had a spoonful of some of the dishes. This got the attention of my relatives, who prodded her to help and stuff herself silly, but she just turned shyer and didn't finish tasting the other dishes.

This year, my girlfriend doesn't have any reason to be shy. She doesn't have to sleep on the floor. She doesn't have to share a comfort room with the maids. She doesn't have to don her best outfits for anyone. She doesn't have to starve herself on Noche Buena.

Because we just got ourselves a place. I'm pretty sure we'll have a merry Christmas this year.

Plane ride moments on my first ever trip

By Patricia Nadine Mirasol



At the terminal
A predictable wave of first-time emotions:
Enthusiasm struggling with anxiety,
The eager-beaver competing with the clumsy,
As the frenzied ticket counter blurred
Into the more orderly waiting area.
Departure to the land of the free
Grasping my bag like it was a present to Immigration
With the earnestness of a Magus guarding his Kingly gift:
The cabin at first glance reassuring with its ambience.
And yet, the suggestion that even Santa is not immune to vertigo;
Theoretically now, how exactly do claustrophobics cope?
A barf in the offing.
Back to welcoming home shores
Christmas over 30,000 feet,
With the in-flight radio still sounding like it came
From another person's earphones;
Jokes and asides
About loved ones back home:
A Haagen Dazs vanilla ice cream cake never tasted so good,

Patricia spent her first Christmas out of the country 11 years ago. She spent one Christmas Eve onboard a plane on her way back to Hawaii from L.A.

All the things I want

By Patricia Dimaano

I AM 21 years old, and my biggest wish list is this:

I want a 2005 BMW 316i, manual transmission this Christmas (in black sapphire metallic, please!). I want black leather seats and 17-inch mag wheels with that.

Well, okay, I'm not entirely sure who would be nice and rich enough to give me a new car.

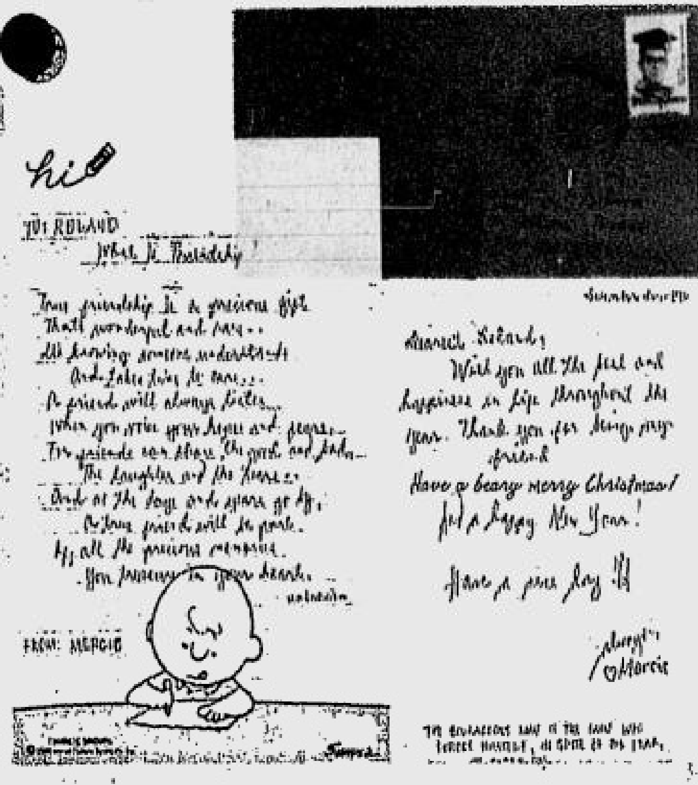
But I do have another wish list. And deep in my heart, I would be so much happier if this list does come true (though I'm not saying I'm giving up on my BMW!).

- I wish drunk people won't drive. It's one thing to celebrate Christmas and be wasted, it's another thing to go behind the wheel while reeking of alcohol. A drunk driver puts not only himself in danger, but all other motorists and pedestrians on the road. He puts people's lives at risk. That is just plain and simple irresponsibility and disrespect for life and property.
- I wish everyone has positive thoughts always. It's hard to think positive, especially with the fiscal crisis and the natural disasters coming our way. It's hard to have a sunshiny disposition when our countrymen are suffering from poverty. But what the heck—it wouldn't hurt.

With all the crap that's happening, being optimistic may yet pull us through this. Just think, the best is yet to come. Also, when you're down, there is nowhere else to go but up.

- I wish this generation, our generation, would be more responsible and accountable for our own actions. I hope this generation would stop blaming other people (family, peers, classmates, professors) for their angst. It's time to stand up. It's your life, handle it. If you demand to be treated like an adult, then act like one. There is no place for brats in the real world.
- I wish for happiness and love in every home. The family is the basic unit of our society. It's the family that hones the kind of people that will be part of this community, so it's important that the atmosphere at home be filled with peace and love.
- World peace! (wink, wink)

A sappy Christmas list? I really don't care. It's my list, and when they do come true, trust me, the world will be a much better place.



hi

TO: ROLAND

FROM: MERCIE

Have a merry merry Christmas!
And a happy New Year!

Have a nice day!!

Mercie

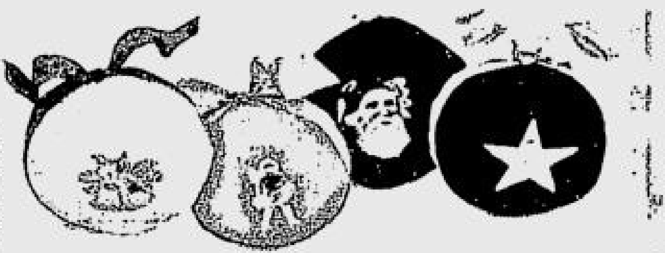
More than just a card

THIS greeting card, together with the short poem, was sent by my friend Mercie in 1990. I consider this card as a "magic card" because it never fails to give me courage and hope in my low moments, even up to now that I am already a Grade 3 teacher.

I was once a pessimistic person, but with my dear friend around, I got to view life in a positive way. Mercie has been with me through thick and thin. She was the first person who accepted me as a gay person. From her, I also learned that love is not just holding on, it is letting go, too.

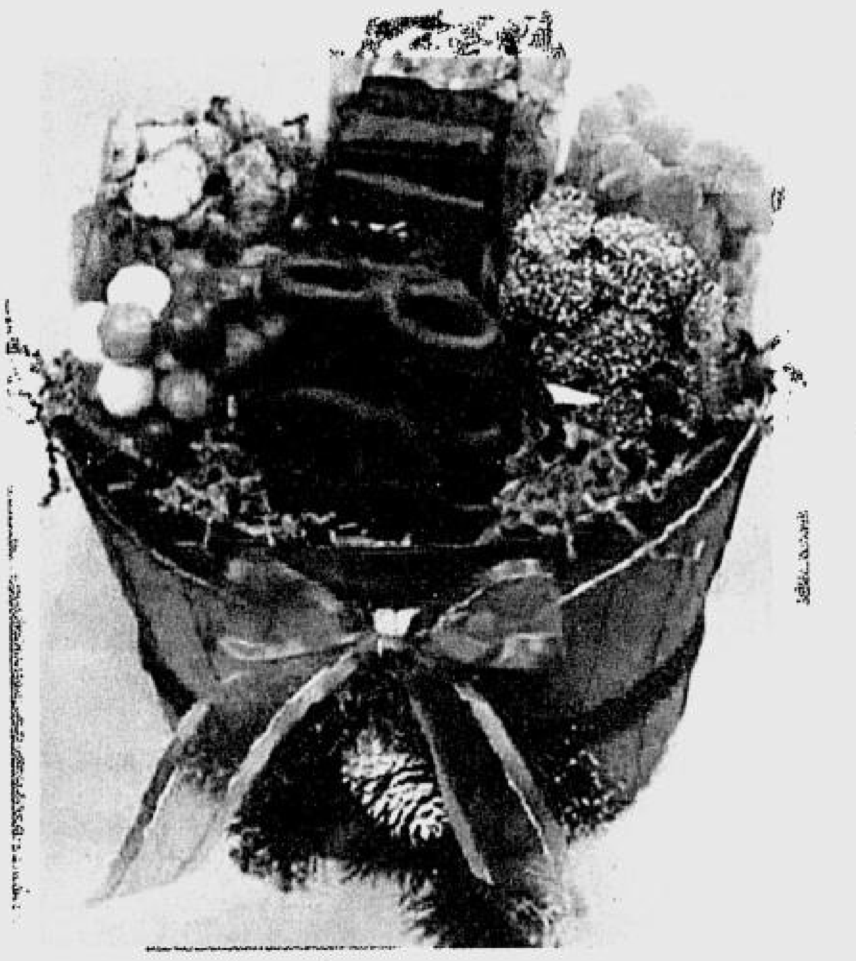
I miss Mercie so much because she lives in another country now. But it is just her physical presence that I miss. With our friendship built stronger through letters, no distance can keep us apart. As long as there is understanding, as long as there is acceptance, as long as there is love, our friendship will continue to grow.

Roland Tubera
Davao City



A non-Christian's holiday wish list

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor



DECEMBER days creep up so fast and without warning.

Christmas bells are a-ringing; cash registers are ka-chinging.

I've fondness for the season, if not for the reason.

I'm not a Christian. Don't get me wrong: I just don't belong to the flock.

I'm atheistic on some days and agnostic on others; I'm my own rock.

I love the lights, the cold yet snowless nights.

As a kid without worries, it meant action figures in gift-wrapped boxes.

Money from relatives I was not familiar with, nor care to know now.

Food we didn't normally eat and grapes tacked above doorways.

Going to church and singing along salvation chanteys aloud, always!

But now I'm older, losing hair, getting wiser and a bit jaded.

I've no war with God, let that be clear. My old beliefs have just faded.

But I'm happy and can celebrate the season the way I want to.

I found peace and sense of self years back, and now I'll do stuff that I have to.

I'll look back at how the year didn't suck, and I got to, uh, let's just say I had good luck.

I'm grateful for cool new people I met, whether on the net, or in the flesh.

And the great things we got to partake of, like art, culture, debates and freedom to choose.

Oh, 'tis the season again to enjoy truces, or get weepy in the company of booze.

I'll always love the lights, the cold and cuddling nights.

Let's celebrate differences and do away with the name-calling.

We're all getting older and losing time, so let's just quit stalling.

But what do I really want for the holidays? Hmmm, let's see.

I used to pray for peace on earth, but have you seen the news lately?

I just want everyone to be healthy and happy, content and cozy.

I want money, more work opportunities, and yeah, more money.

I want Marvel Legends and DC Direct toys, DVDs of "Twin Peaks," "Buffy" and "24."

I want the world's finest booty, fun vacations, a better body, my own house, and a car (or four).

For some things in this list, I just have to work harder.

I just hope I don't feel anywhere near as sore.

January dims the lights, and all those colorful, cheerful nights.

We'll think about how much we spent celebrating the birth of a messiah figure.

We'll talk how we over-ate and how we got bigger.

But we won't care because we had fun in all its myriad forms.

We spent time with people we actually like, got drunk, or woke up naked and spooning.

We'll be back to work, school, our crazy routines, our festivity-free dorms.

Holidays have to end, of course, so they'll have deeper and special meaning.

So whichever belief system gets your soul off, put tolerance and harmony in your creed.

May the new year allow us to be better persons.

And may earthly pleasures exceed all our expectations.

You'll always be my buddy!

Marla Miniano
2bU! Correspondent

DEC. 8, 1998

I was a high school freshie then, and although I already had quite a number of friends, I wasn't particularly tight with anyone just yet. I can't remember exactly how it happened, but that day, I received an early Christmas present: my best friend, Stephanie.

December 2004

We've gone through a lot, but I'm happy to say that we're as close as ever. I have tons of fond Christmas memories with her: marveling at the teddy bear-adorned Christmas tree in their living room, eating chocolate cake in my room, the lovely knitted top she gave me a couple of years back, the charming journal I gave her last year.

She would always ask me what I wanted for Christmas, and I would answer "*bahala ka na*," only to text her a few minutes later to tell her exactly what she should get for me. She has a knack for planning parties for the whole *barkada*, making sure that everything is perfect and that everyone would be there.

She's Santa Claus' female version: jolly and generous, warm and fuzzy, and loved by young and old alike.

It has been six Decembers since I found a soul sister amid the strangeness and fretfulness of being the new kid in school. It has been six Decembers since God gave me that unexpected yet wonderful Christmas gift in the form of a big-hearted girl who spreads joy and cheer to the lives of everyone she meets.

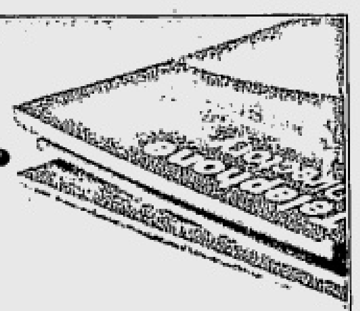
It has been six Decembers, and my dear friend Steph will always be the best, during Christmastime and otherwise.

'Tis the Season to be Jolly...

Have yourself a Merry Christmas with Dusit Hotel Nikko's December offerings. Savor authentic Thai, Japanese, Vietnamese and International cuisines at the specialty restaurants of the hotel with special set menus on Dec. 24, 25, 31 and January 1, 2005. Enjoy listening to the angelic voices of the children's choir at the hotel's lobby, 6pm daily until Dec. 23. Have a fill of the cake of the month and Christmas delights at the Deli Shop. Take home of the hotel's version of Puto Bumbong and Bibingka. Welcome the year 2005 with a party at Fiesta San Miguel's New Year's Eve countdown with a twist. Guests may enjoy the hotel's Shop 'Til You Drop holiday room package for only P4,500 nett in a deluxe room or P5,500 nett for a corner deluxe room and take pleasure of the perks. For queries and reservations call 867-3333.

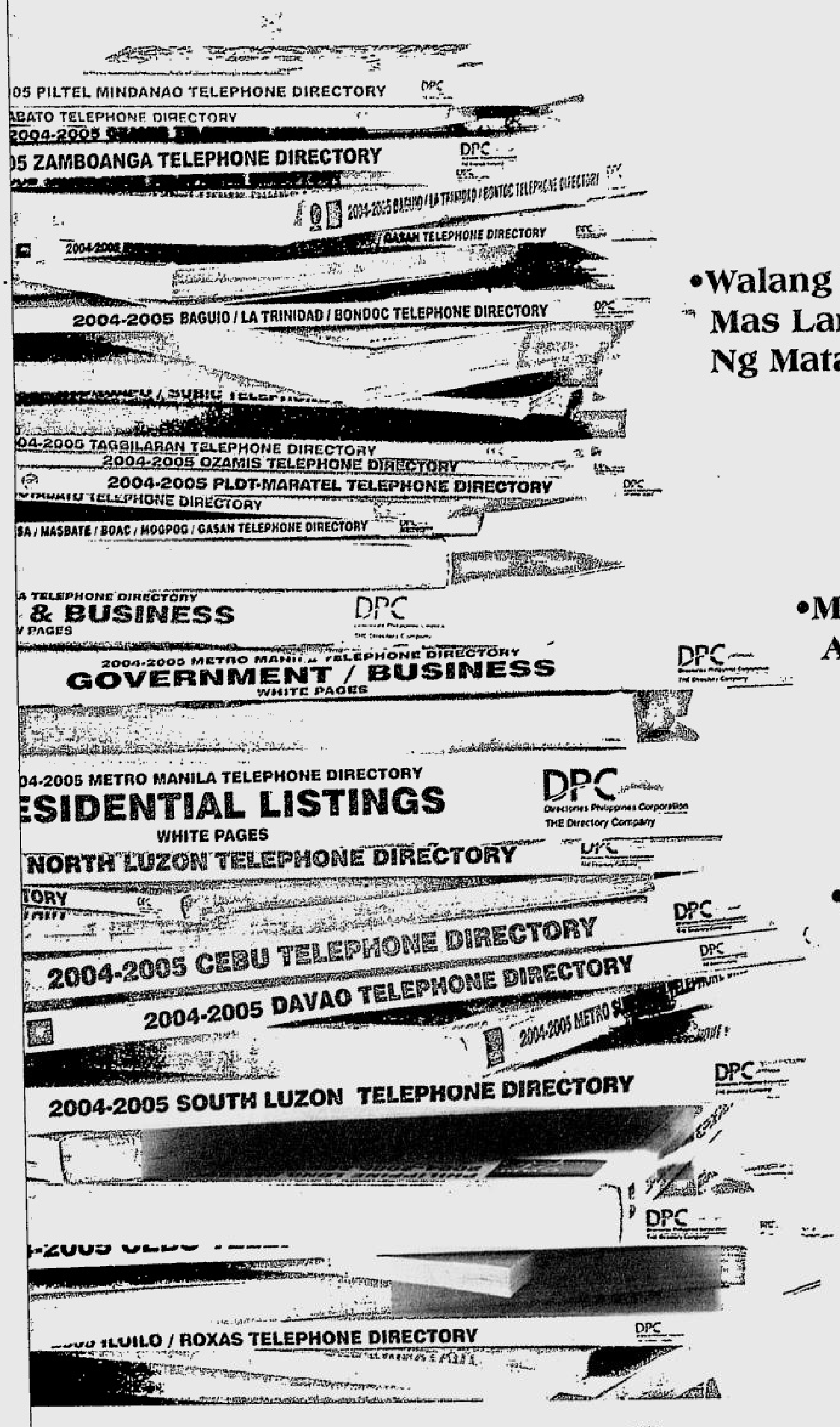
Dusit Hotel Nikko
MANILA • PHILIPPINES

Pag Konti Ang Matatawagan, Konti Ang Saya.



Pero Sa PLDT, Katakut-Takot Ang Saya!

ABANGAN!



05 PILTEL MINDANAO TELEPHONE DIRECTORY
ABATO TELEPHONE DIRECTORY
2004-2005
05 ZAMBOANGA TELEPHONE DIRECTORY
2004-2005 BAGUIO / LA TRINIDAD / BONTOC TELEPHONE DIRECTORY
GASAN TELEPHONE DIRECTORY
2004-2005 BAGUIO / LA TRINIDAD / BONDOC TELEPHONE DIRECTORY
SUBIC TELEPHONE
04-2005 TAGBILARAN TELEPHONE DIRECTORY
2004-2005 OZAMIS TELEPHONE DIRECTORY
2004-2005 PLDT-MARATEL TELEPHONE DIRECTORY
TELEPHONE DIRECTORY
SA / MASBATE / BOAC / MOGPOG / GASAN TELEPHONE DIRECTORY
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& BUSINESS
PAGES
DPC
2004-2005 METRO MANILA TELEPHONE DIRECTORY
GOVERNMENT / BUSINESS
WHITE PAGES
04-2005 METRO MANILA TELEPHONE DIRECTORY
ESIDENTIAL LISTINGS
WHITE PAGES
Directories Philippines Corporation
THE Directory Company
NORTH LUZON TELEPHONE DIRECTORY
TORY
2004-2005 CEBU TELEPHONE DIRECTORY
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-2005 CEBU
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- Walang Katapat!
  Mas Lamang Sa Dami
  Ng Matatawagan!
- Mas Lalago
  Ang Negosyo Mo.
- Mas Maraming
  Value-Added Services.

Kaya Saan Ka Man Sa Pilipinas,
Mula Aparri Hanggang Jolo,
Dito Ka Na Sa Pinakasulit!

PLDT

Iba Pa Rin Ang May PLDT Landline

Abangan!

Sangkatutak Na Saya Na May Kasunod Pa!

to be young • to be you • to be young • to be you! • To be you!
2bU
LIFESTYLE

For feedback, e-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Text us your feedback:
inquirer life name/city/message to
2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Surrounded by Santas

Santa Claus is not just a fat man in a red suit. He comes in all shapes and sizes

By Pam Pastor

I STOPPED believing in Santa Claus when I woke up too early one Christmas morning and caught my mother hiding behind the television, stuffing my bright red stocking with goodies.

The discovery did not cause me disappointment. At that age, presents were always good. It didn't matter whether they came from the North Pole or from my parents. I would like to believe that I merely shrugged my 6-year-old shoulders and chalked it up as the first of a series of realizations that things are hardly ever what you thought they were.

Fast forward to over a decade later. After a college degree, several jobs and the arrival and departure of countless people, I have changed my mind. I am 24 years old and I still believe in Santa Claus.

And why not?

I see him everywhere.

In my boyfriend who spoils me and stays with me patiently even when I work until 4 a.m. In my mother who welcomed me back into her home and continues to shower me with love every day. In my grandma who would hand the last peso in her pocket over to someone who needs it more. In my other grandma who continues to give so much of herself to so many people.

In my friends who offer their affection in various but equally wonderful ways. In Rhandy who spent hours fixing my laptop and refusing to take credit for it. In Sally, Imelda and Melinda, super housekeepers who are protective of us and who can cook Ma-ling and *tocino* just the way I like them.

In Kuya Elmer who does not complain when he has to fetch me from the bus station at 3 a.m. In Manong who has never shown any sign of annoyance —not even when he has to keep opening the gate for me when I get home at 4, 5 or even 6 in the morning.

In the kind-hearted souls who returned my wallet when I left it behind. In people who constantly make life easier, even in the simplest ways.

We are surrounded by Santas who don't need chimneys and reindeer to make a difference—if we can only learn to see them.

And thanks to them, despite its flaws and the existence of everything ugly and negative, the world has again made a believer out of me.

Relaxing getaways…

…anywhere more than a hundred feet from your desk would be a good start. It could be a park. A quiet corner in a bookstore. And if by chance you have a jet at your disposal, people say Bora-Bora is nice this time of year.

But if all you've got are a few hundred bucks at your disposal, there are some gems in the metropolis worth visiting.

Let's start with the malls. Yup, you read it right. Malling for most people can be relaxing. The scent of freshly baked croissants, a leather goods store, can be as relaxing as a lit vanilla candle.

Visit art galleries. Landscapes remain to be a popular subject among artists. Look at the paintings. Appreciate its beauty. The serene lake. The calm skies. Your busy life should imitate art.

Drop by the old college open grounds. The cool breeze. The nostalgia. Plus the fact you no longer have to cram for an exam, can be quite relaxing.

Go to the movies. *Ahhh*…comfy seats. A constant 24 degrees. Just don't pick a movie about Japanese ghosts, World War II or Japanese ghosts in World War II. Sit back, relax and watch a no-brainer movie.

Surf the Internet. The world wide web is full of sites where you can give your weary mind that much needed break.

Spend an hour in a bookstore. Get a book or a magazine. Pick a quiet corner. Start reading. And since store clerks won't bother you while you're reading, you might actually get to finish that book you're reading. Besides, they're busy returning all those new magazines into their plastic covers.

Visit your garden. Whether it's a large yard or three potted plants that make up your garden, the green colors and the gentle leaves blowing in the wind provide that soothing effect. Plus plants give off that much needed oxygen your body needs.

Now let's try something closer. Like your bed. It's near. It's free. It's yours. It's open 24/7. And since it's Christmas, your arms and feet will instinctively search for those cool spots on the bed. And once they find them, a good sleep is just a few winks away.

You could also try the kitchen. Make yourself a sandwich. Fix yourself a glass of iced tea. Simple things like these provide a pleasant distraction from take-home work or a household chore. The light meal, the cool drink is just what your body needs to calm down from all that work.

So there you go. Relaxing getaways can be near and inexpensive.

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Lemon Iced Tea
with 100% RDA Vitamin C

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Peace on Earth & Sky

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Lemon Iced Tea
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Makes 36 servings
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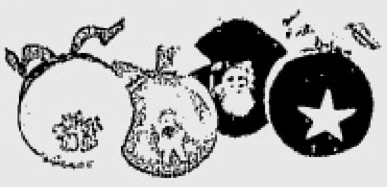
The soothing effect of tea.
The refreshing taste of lemon.
Sip in heavenly peace.

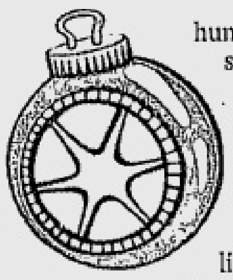
Earth & Sky Lemon Iced Tea
Refreshed & Calm

Now available in 45g, 250g, 500g, 750g, and 1 kg foil packs. From The Coca-Cola Company

About a boy



By Roehl Niño Bautista



I WOKE up to the incessant ringing of my alarm clock. It was three in morning. The first of the nine masses I wanted to complete was to start at half past four.

Completing the dawn mass or *simbang gabi* would grant you a wish, so tradition said. And I had a wish: to be a "*iskolar ng bayan*" at UP, to ease my parents' worries about my college tuition fee.

The UPCAT was still about a year hence, but it would be good if I prepared earlier, right? "God helps those who help themselves." So here I was.

The dawn mass this year was a perky affair, unlike last year which made me want to go back to sleep. The priest then was a foreigner, and his halting efforts to speak in Filipino made the mass slow and lethargic.

But this year's priest was a Filipino, and his sermon woke up the crowd. Thanks to him, my early-morning drowsiness disappeared.

Outside the church, the stalls selling *puto bumbong* and *bibingka* were crowded, everyone eager to taste the traditional delicacy. Good thing I placed my order beforehand when I arrived at the church. I bought two bags of the delicacy for my cousins who would come later that day to our house.

Not far from where I was standing, I saw a kid in tattered clothes, lying on a carton with his hands on his stomach. He looked really hungry. While he was almost inside the church, people evaded him as much as they could, and he earned a lot of stares when he took communion.

I looked at the bags of food I was carrying and felt a little bit of sacrifice wouldn't hurt. This kid needed it more than my cousins and I did.

So I sat near the boy, and gave him a bag of food. Was he surprised! I also gave him the warm drink that I bought, and began talking to him.

His name was Miguel. He was 12 years old. He told me he ran away from home because he did not feel his parents' love. We began talking earnestly, and before I left, I also gave him my jacket, because all he got was a tattered shirt.

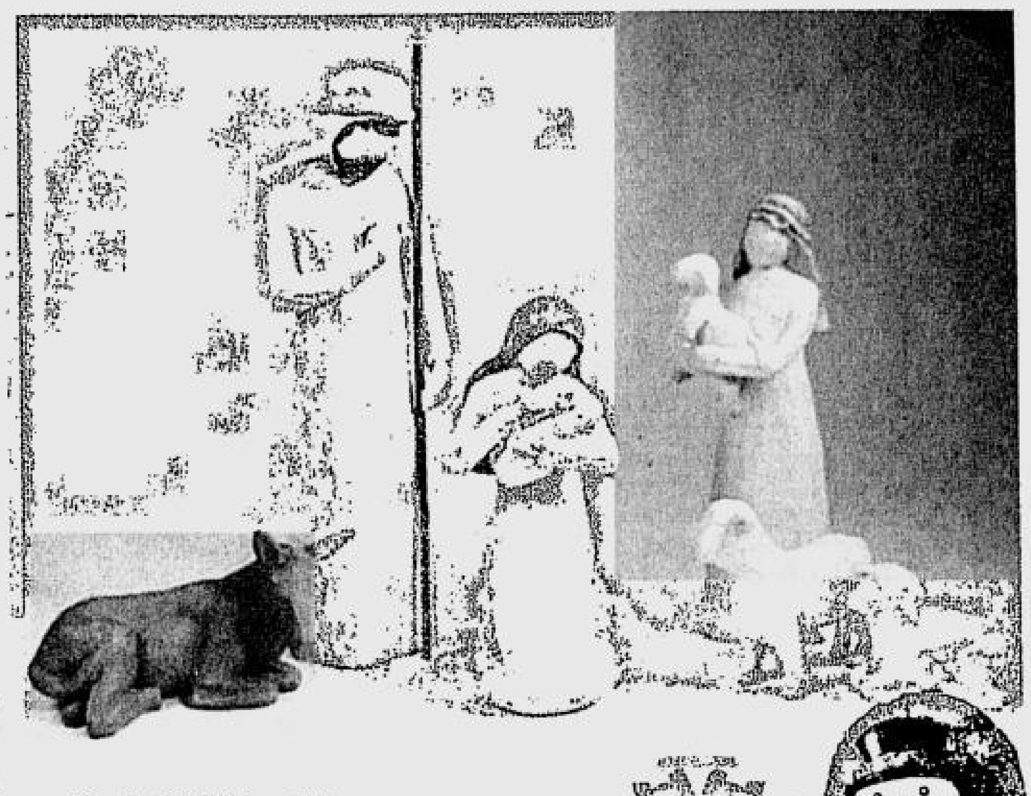
I returned every day to the corner where I first saw him, bringing along my cousins, who also gave him some clothes and made friends with him. And they promised to do something for him.

The last day of the dawn mass arrived. We searched for him after the mass but we didn't see him in his usual spot.

Then we heard a familiar voice call out our names. It was Miguel, with a big smile on his face. He was with his family.

Wow, so that's what my cousins did for Miguel. They helped find his family, who were profuse in thanking us for helping find their son.

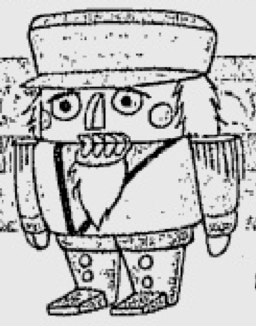
After much handshaking, we bid each other goodbye. Miguel tried to return the jacket I gave him, but I told him not to.



"That's my gift to you this Christmas. Remember that your parents will always love you, and God too. He wouldn't have let us meet if He didn't. Have a Merry Christmas with your family!"

I never saw him again.

The author is a 14-year-old student from Claret School, Quezon City.



The morning after

Kindness should not be for Christmas only, but for always

By Charmaine Tan

CHRISTMAS is in the air.

It has been ever since the the last quarter of the year set in. The wreaths, the fake snowflakes, and the lights started appearing out of nowhere. Then the commercial promotions began to sprout like mushrooms, and then came the stampede to the malls of the Christmas-shopping crowd.

The people have begun transforming into kindred souls for the past few weeks, even if it is not in their nature to break out in Christmas carols and give everyone they meet a smile. As usual, the Christmas excitement will reach its fever pitch on Dec. 25.

And then it hits you like a truck: Dec. 26. The morning after. The dreaded morning after. Or, at least, I'm the one who's dreading it.

You can't miss it: the presents are all torn open, the media has gone on a New Year phase, and people are making resolutions you know they will never keep. A few days later and it's back to the grind, back to harsh reality. Modern santas start turning back into grouches who won't even give you a glance, and you'll realize that this place has always been the same dog-eat-dog world you have known since you were born.

This is when I start wishing that there hasn't been a Christmas at all. What is the point in pretending to be oh-so-merry when you're going to be Satan's spawn again in the next year? People who do this have ruined the true meaning of Christmas and have defeated its purpose.

I hate it that people are kind on Christmas merely because of tradition. I've nothing against tradition and all, but there has to be a deeper reason behind all that compassion.

The Christmas spirit isn't meant to be forgotten for the rest of the 11 months of the year. It shouldn't be something temporary that people easily take for granted.

So here's a challenge for all of you: this Christmas, show kindness not just because it's the time of the year again, but because you want to. This time, keep your resolution and shine with the Christmas spirit for the whole year round.

Christmas choker

Next thing I knew, the darn candy was stuck in my throat and I was having a hard time breathing

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

ONE Christmas several years ago, my mom gave me a huge pack of hard candies that I so wanted to instantly attack. However, I was ordered not to lay a finger on it until the big day. With all the cartoon shows on television, I forgot all about the candies.

And then came Noche Buena. After stuffing myself like I was some turkey, tearing gift wrappers and brushing my teeth, I suddenly remembered the sweets so I crept to the fridge, stole a candy and hurriedly jumped back to bed and pretended to sleep.

Next thing I knew, the darn candy was stuck in my throat and I was having a hard time breathing. I hopped out of bed, dashed to where the adults were and made a scene. After a few seconds of charades, an intelligent adult figured out what was happening and gave me a smack at the back. Out came the candy—spinning, gleaming like a star.

The timeless gift

By Harrison Kelly

SHOPPING for a Christmas gift can be the most nerve-racking event of the year. Shopping for my wife can be a special challenge. Vacuum cleaners are too impersonal, football tickets are too impractical, and kitchen gadgets are downright impossible.

I was at a loss, with Christmas fast approaching. In desperation, I asked my secretary, Sally, to help me pick out a present.

We walked side by side in a fast-paced walk, two blocks to the jewelry store. Working in the downtown business district had its advantages; being close to a lot of shopping places was one of them.

However, there were disadvantages as well. On the way, our path crossed a couple of homeless men, huddled together by a vent from one of the nearby buildings.

I started to cross the street to avoid them, but traffic was too thick. Just before we approached, I switched sides with Sally to keep them from confronting her. They were surely going to beg for money, pretending to buy food, but any donation would surely end up as beer or wine.

As we got closer, I could see that one was probably in his mid-30's and the other was a boy of school age—around 13 or 14. Both were dressed shabbily, the older with a too-tight sport coat ripped at the sleeve, while the boy was without a coat at all, only a tattered shirt separating him from the blowing wind.

A quarter or two and they'll leave us alone, I thought. "I'll handle this," I said with my best male bravado.

But Sally seemed undisturbed by the sight of the two beggars. In fact, she seemed comfortable in their presence. Before they asked, she offered.

"Is there anything I can do for you?" she directed her question to the two homeless men. I was in shock, waiting to pull Sally away from a dangerous situation, but she stood firm.

The two men looked at her with surprise until the older one spoke up. "Yes, ma'am. We do need something."

Here it comes—the hook, I thought. The two panhandlers are looking for a handout, an easy mark. As I watched, I could tell the younger boy was shivering in the winter breeze, but what could I do?

"Could you tell us the time?" asked the older man. Sally glanced at her watch and replied, "Twelve-fifteen." He nodded his thanks and didn't say another word.

We continued on our way to the jewelry store, and I had to ask Sally about the encounter.

"Why did you ask if you could help that man?"

"He was cold and in need, that's why," she replied in a matter-of-fact tone.

"But he's a bum. He could have tried to rob you or something."

"I take care of myself. But sometimes you have to take a chance on someone."

We arrived at the jewelry store, and Sally quickly found the perfect gift for my wife—a pair of diamond earrings. While she was there, she bought a man's watch, not an expensive one, but she was always thrifty. Probably a gift for her husband, I thought.

As we walked back to our building, the two vagabonds were still hovering around the sidewalk grate. Once again, I tried to come between Sally and the two, but she wouldn't let me. To my surprise, when we got next to them, she pulled the watch out of the bag and handed it to the older man.

"Here, I'm sure you know how to use it."

He was as shocked as I was. "Thank you, much obliged, ma'am," he said, trying the watch on his wrist. As we walked away, Sally had a gleam in her eyes.

Wish upon a star

By Kim Libarios

"When you wish upon a star
Makes no difference who you are
Anything your heart desires
Will come to you"—Jiminy Cricket

THIS year is different.

This year, I graduated from college and started working. This year, I can no longer prolong my Christmas break, since my job requires me to be back by the 27th.

This year I won't be there to celebrate my Lola's 80th birthday, since we usually hold it on the 27th. This year, I cannot have absences like I did in college, or I won't be paid for those absences and may even lose my job.

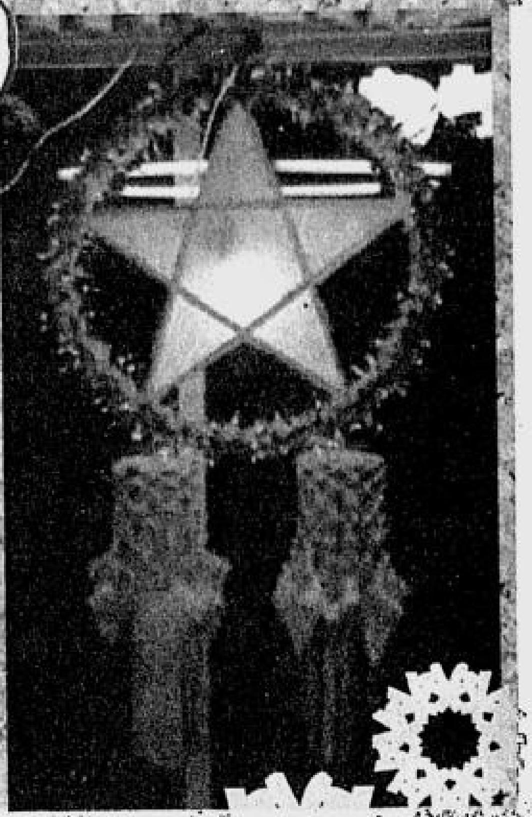
This year, I won't be getting allowances from my parents anymore. Instead, my meager salary now supports my needs, my dog and, of course, the gifts I'm buying for my family and friends.

This year, I won't be able to savor the sea breeze that wafts in our provincial home. I can't go home because of my job. Instead, the city's firecrackers and grime will stuff my nose.

Yes, a lot of things have changed in my life this year. I feel as if Christmas is leaving me behind. I miss home and I miss my family.

But, as others would put it, I am now in the "real world," and there is nothing to hold on to but myself—my ambitions, my hard work, my dreams. I suppose I am growing up.

How I wish it was just like before. My wish upon a star...



The hardest Christmas of my life

By Neetu Emyka K. Dargani

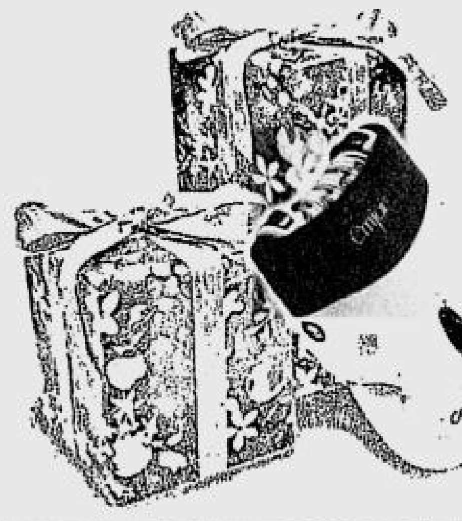
THE YEAR 2002 was the hardest for all of us in the family. My dad died of cardiac arrest, and there was no reason to take pleasure in the festivities that accompany the holidays. Even now, we miss him, and we try to feel his presence everyday of our lives.

I know that Christmas is a time of rejoicing and thanking God for the wonderful things He gives us. But in our family, we do not put up a Christmas tree, nor do we surround it with presents. We have no Noche Buena, just a simple dinner. This is because we are Indians, and we celebrate a bit differently.

But that unhappy Christmas, our family did not have the usual get-together, and the young kids were nowhere to be seen. The only thing I did to ease the pain we felt was to set up dancing white lights in the living room.

When New Year came, we went to bed right after dinner. There was no feeling of happiness, and my mom was crying deep inside.

That was the first year we spent Christmas without my dad.



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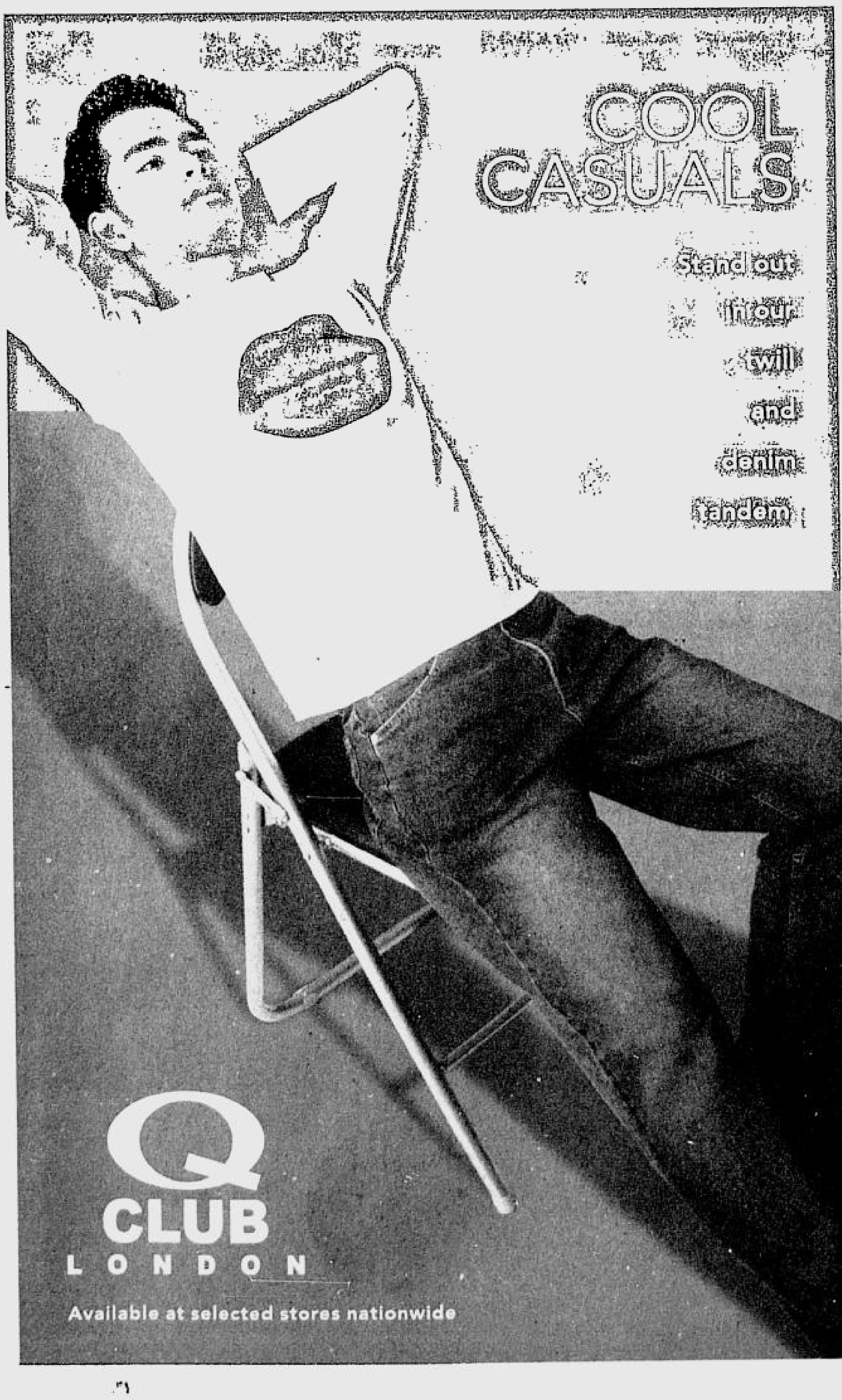

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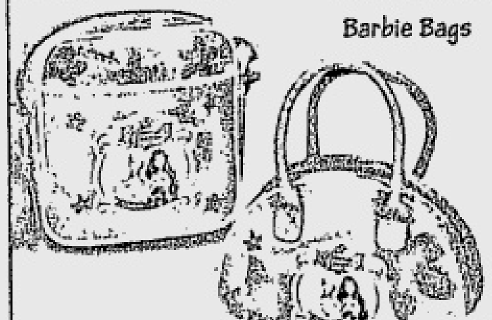

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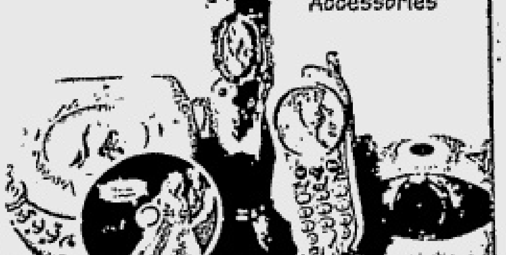

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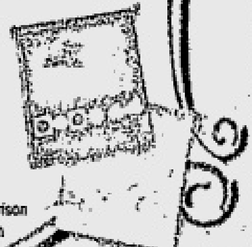

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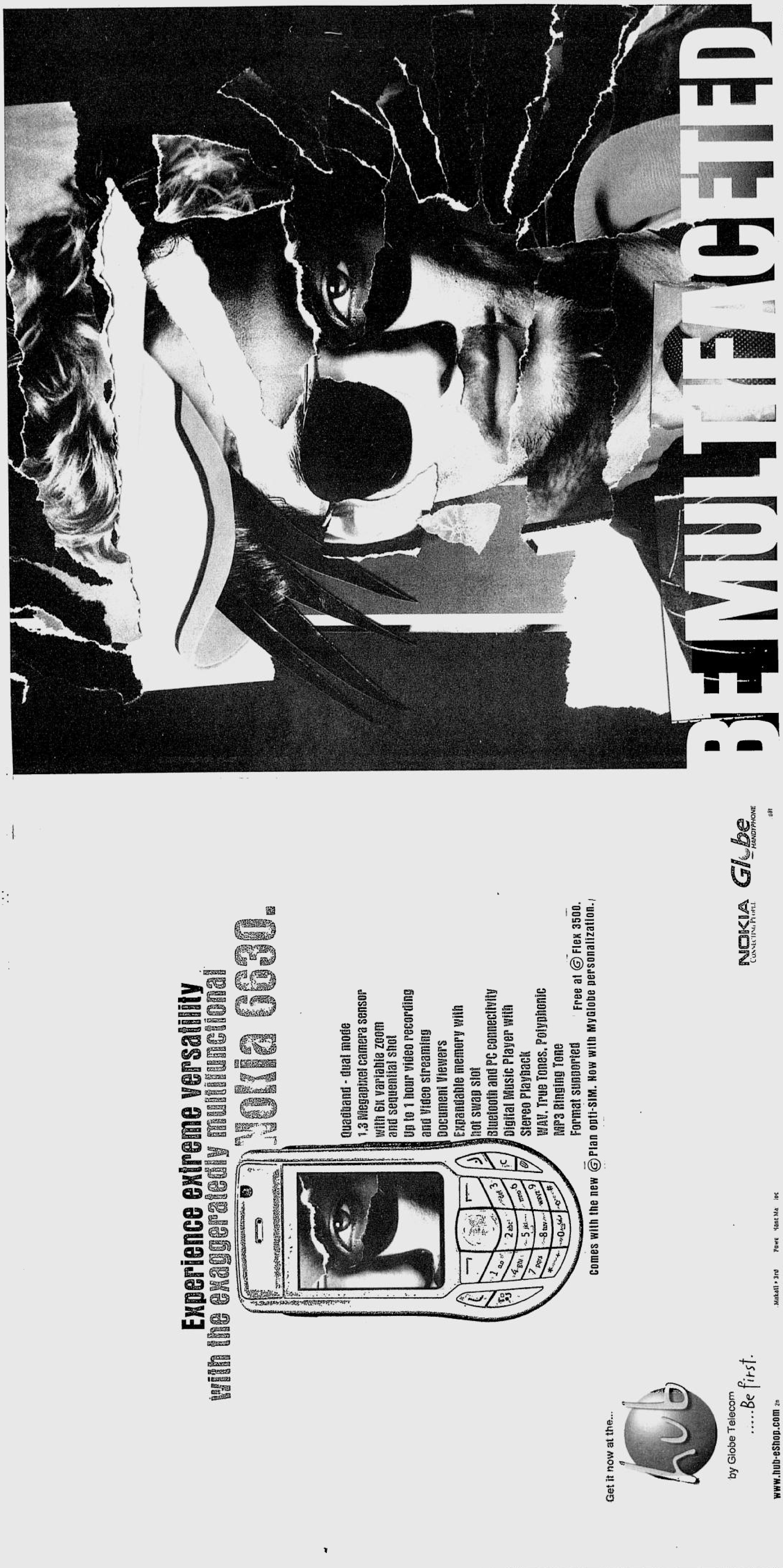
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The Xmas spirit

By Jobelle E. Malanyaon

SANTA Claus, new clothes, Christmas trees and multicolored lights, lots of yummy food, cousins and relatives coming over, *ninongs* and *ninangs* giving crisp peso bills, *simbang gabi*, cool breezes, and, of course, the birth of our dear Savior...

These things meant Christmas to the five-year-old in me.

Christmas is a happy time, and that's what always keeps me excited. But as I grew older, I realized that some really important things about Christmas are not seen or realized by our naked eyes.

I came to know that aside from Mary giving birth to Jesus Christ, there are many things that matter, not only during Christmas time but every day of the year. These things can be summed up in just one word, "love."

On the streets and the radio, we hear Christmas carols sung by children. It only shows that even these little children, in their simple way, are excited to feel the coming of Christmas.

Another tradition we have during the coming of Christmas is attending *simbang gabi*. Having to go to dawn Mass is a bit of a sacrifice, but it is a significant tradition not only because it strengthens relationships among family members but also because it can help intensify our faith.

This is the time when we most feel the presence of the Lord because it is the spiritual preparation for Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ.

Christmas, as it has been often said, is about giving and sharing. It's about forgetting your past hatreds and forgiving people who have hurt you most.

It's about putting a smile on everyone's face and realizing that you are smiling wider than they are after that. It's about making peace and feeling peaceful within yourself.

It's about having your family and friends close to you whisper "I love you" in your ear, and vice versa.

All of these things are emphasized during Christmas time. But why not emphasize them every day of the year? Why not give love, not only on Christmas day? Wouldn't it be wonderful to do all these things every single day of our lives? What a better world we will have then!

Let us not limit ourselves to doing wonderful things only once a year. Let us spread joy not only during Christmas but every day.

Love should be given away, not kept within our hearts and shared only on Dec. 25.

Let us fill every day with the Christmas spirit. This way, the love that we have will stay in our hearts not only for one season of the year, but forever.

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Promo period is from November 22 to December 31, 2004.

BAMBOO hypes up the audience.

> The 50,000 kids who came were all rock music lovers. When lesser-known groups came on stage, a steady barrage of loud boos, groans, plastic bottles and giveaway fans flew at them

Press pass

By Janus Victoria
Contributor

Two weeks ago, I got my very first concert press pass and it was for the MTV Staying Alive Music Summit for HIV/AIDS held in the open field at The Fort. My pass said the gates would open at 10 a.m. and performances would start at 4:30 p.m. Of course I arrived late. Because I could.

The great thing about having a press pass to a rock concert is that you never have to line up. You have a special entrance and a separate area—the best seat in the house. You can come anytime and there will still be room for you. It will wait for you, no matter how many bathroom, coffee or cigarette breaks you take.

You also don't have to worry about suffocating or rubbing sweat with strangers. There's a lot of space where you can move around, chat a bit with your fellows, or find a better spot to see the performers. It's all very civilized, you see.

But that is not what a rock concert is about.

I arrived at The Fort at past 8 p.m. As I walked towards the venue, I heard Barbie's Cradle perform. I was a bit surprised that the band played so early; after all, they are a popular band. Either the concert started on time, which rarely happens , or the line-up of artists included only the great ones. The answer, I realized after a long time of waiting, was neither.

Four hours passed before a good band followed Barbie's Cradle. The time in between was peppered with an odd assortment of artists. It was a mix of everything—RnB, alternative, hip-hop and even a bit of opera. While variety is usually a good thing, it didn't work in this concert.

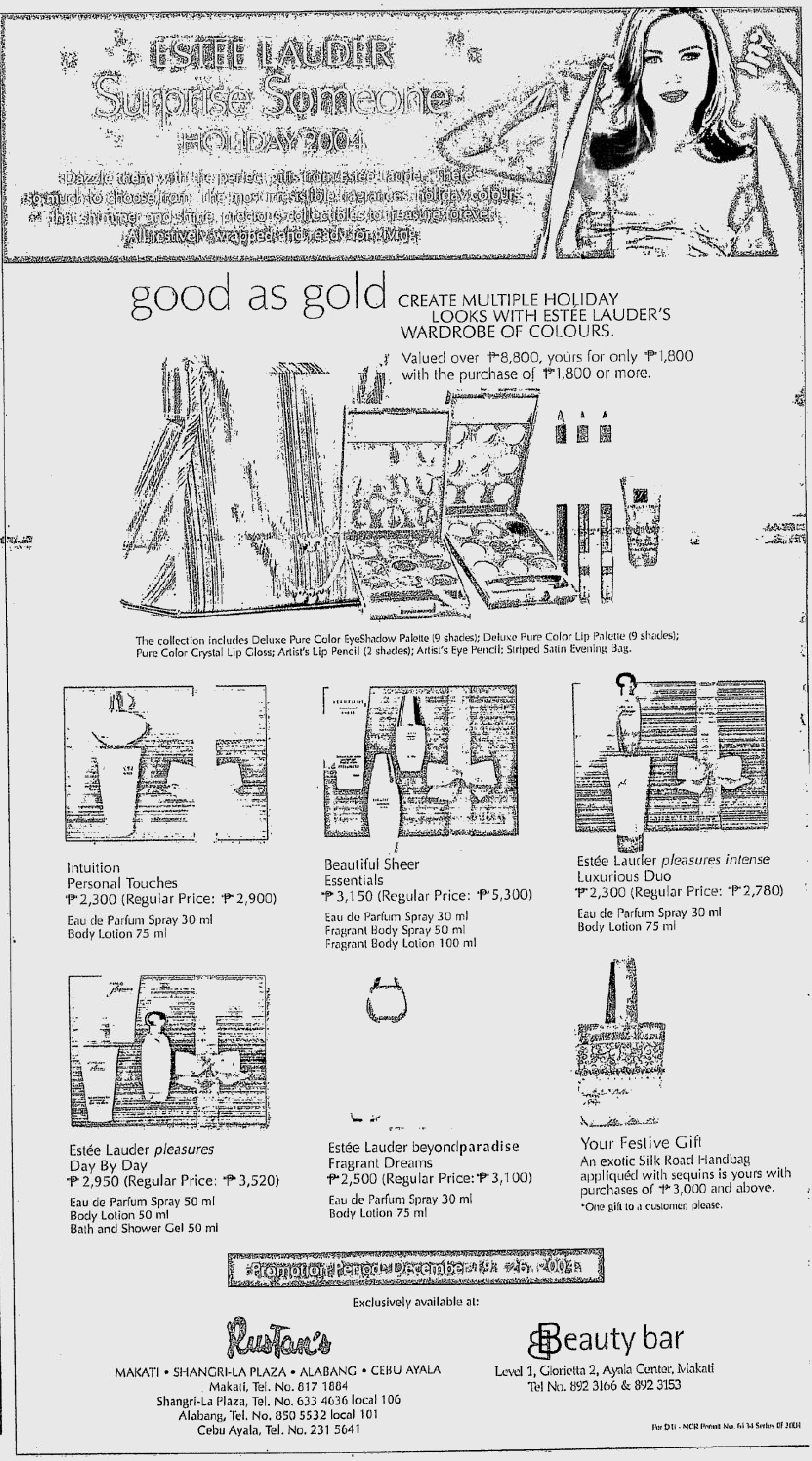
The 50,000 kids who came were all rock music lovers. They were polite to the four largely unknown foreign acts, namely Joshua Payne, Jay Sean, The Barbs and Duncan Sheik. That is, they only gave blank stares. As Payne commented after his performance, "An opera singer shows up at a rock concert, this is what you get."

As for the local artists who did not play rock music, the reaction was pretty bad. When South Border performed, a signboard that said "Hiphop Boloks" was flashed at them. Then, when lesser-known groups came on stage, a steady barrage of loud boos, groans, plastic bottles, and giveaway fans flew at them. Fortunately, no one got hurt.

I felt sorry for them. Each group finished the three-song-per-artist limit with as much enthusiasm as they could muster. There was even one guy from the 7 Shots of Wisdom who tried to creep into the crowd's affections in the most bizarre way: as his group was fin-

PRESS/ F2

MUSIC man Marc Abaya



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Per DTI - NCR Permit No. 6134 Series Of 2004

TROPICAL Depression

Press pass

From page F1

JOEY "Pepe" Smith rocks.

RICO Blanco of Rivermaya (left); Kevin Roy (inset)

PHOTOS BY MTV AND JOSEPH AGCAOILI

ishing its last song, he unbuckled his belt and slowly let his pants drop. As if that wasn't a moronic enough thing to do, he took them off completely, and threw it at the crowd, leaving an image of him walking off the stage in his boxers. Yeah, that was soooo much cooler.

But at the same time I also felt irritated. Instead of building up excitement as the hours passed, these odd acts broke the energy of the event. They were truly out of place.

Another thing that annoyed me were the two male VJs. One was old, the other was new. When the crowd was getting rowdy, one of the girl VJs asked them—in English—to be considerate of each other's safety. When this did nothing, the old guy VJ, who was clearly purely Pinoy, pleaded with the crowd again but this time in Tagalog—in broken and bad Tagalog.

As for the other one, who was foreign-looking, he surprisingly spoke great Tagalog. However, by the middle of the concert, he was obviously drunk, as he slurred his way through his talk of the importance of protecting yourself from AIDS.

It's hard to communicate to an indifferent audience even if the concern is serious, such as AIDS awareness. This is why MTV is the best medium for spreading information about it. Kids will listen to their idols. But if those who communicate the information don't even, at least, look serious about it, the opportunity is wasted.

By midnight, I decided to look for a chair. I found one near the trailers that housed the camera equipment. I sat before a small TV that showed what happened onstage. I told myself I'd get up once the It bands—Bamboo and Rivermaya—got on stage.

An hour later, they were still not there. I couldn't wait anymore. I was tired, although I didn't even sweat one drop. So I got up and left.

As I walked toward the parking lot, I heard the crowd leap to life. Bamboo was playing. It sounded fantastic.

I could go back; I knew my space was still there. But I didn't. For it was precisely all the free space that made it impossible for me to enjoy the music.

DUNCAN Sheik

SOUTH Border

This Conspiracy is more than a theory

By Christian B. Bautista
2bU! Correspondent

Six musicians and a slew of friends find haven in their own watering hole on Visayas Avenue

TALK about a bad idea that became fruitful by freak stokes of luck.

Conspiracy Bar, a social experiment that involved testing the mettle of musicians in running a business, recently marked its first anniversary.

The celebration had a slew of great performers, but it didn't come without a few bumps and bruises.

As Joey Ayala put it, "we're hanging by the skin of our teeth."

The idea for Conspiracy was born out of a need for sense of community. Ayala found a little spot in Visayas Avenue which was referred to him by his accountant.

Noting the cheap rent, he decided to tell his friends about it. Six musicians—Bayang Barrios, Noel Cabangon, Cooky Chua, Cynthia Alexander, Gary Granada and Ayala himself—conspired to put up the place.

However, they didn't go at it alone. After the idea was hatched, they immediately sold the idea—and some stocks (at P15,000 per)—to close friends. To date, over 150 stockholders have lent a hand.

Conspiracy is meant as a venue to hang out and meet with friends. "We just wanted a place na pwede kami magkita-kita. Personally, I'm uncomfortable with most places. The level of discussion is what I'm happy with here. And you also don't need to have pretentions," said Granada.

"We're not really here for business," he added. "We're having fun. I think *yun 'yung* point ng exercise."

After opening, the bar had to deal with birthing pains. Ayala and company had to play it by ear, dealing with inconveniences like finding their market and apologizing to complaining neighbors.

"Wala naman kasi sa aming restaurateur. Puro kami musicians," explained Ayala.

But despite all the hassles, they made it to their first anniversary, and everyone said it was worth all the anguish.

The party went on until the wee hours of the night, with musical performances by popular artists like Twisted Halo and Bayang Barrios and other lesser-known acts like Nityalila and Dawn Bande.

Good music and the need for financial stability aside, Granada has one wish for his and his friend's "baby."

"*Sana maging lugar ito* for an honest-to-goodness free flow of ideas," he said. "At the end of the day, *ang kita namin dito*, goodwill."

CYNTHIA Alexander

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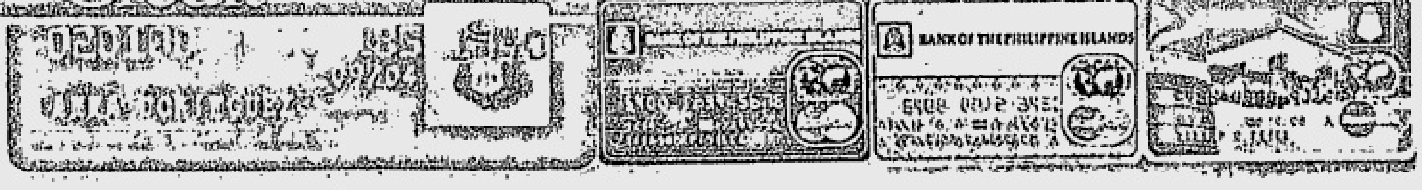

The BPI VOLVO Lifestyle Promo

For BPI Express Credit Classic/Burgundy, Blue MasterCard and Gold MasterCard, every ₱500 single purchase entitles cardholder to one raffle entry. To join, just register your purchase by calling the promo hotline: 683-0008 for Metro Manila and 1-800-10-683-0008 for provincial cardholders or email bpi.lifestyle@1isa.com. Promo period: November 15, 2004 to April 30, 2005.

See flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3121, Series of 2004

For Petron-BPI MasterCard, every ₱500 fuel purchase in participating Petron stations entitles cardholder to one raffle coupon. To join, just drop coupons at these stations. Promo period: October 21, 2004 to April 30, 2005.

See flyers for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2521, Series of 2004

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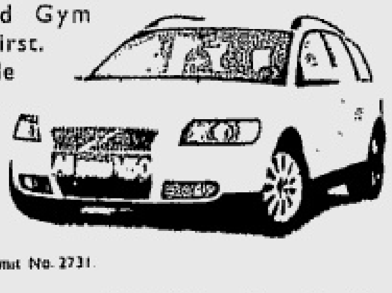

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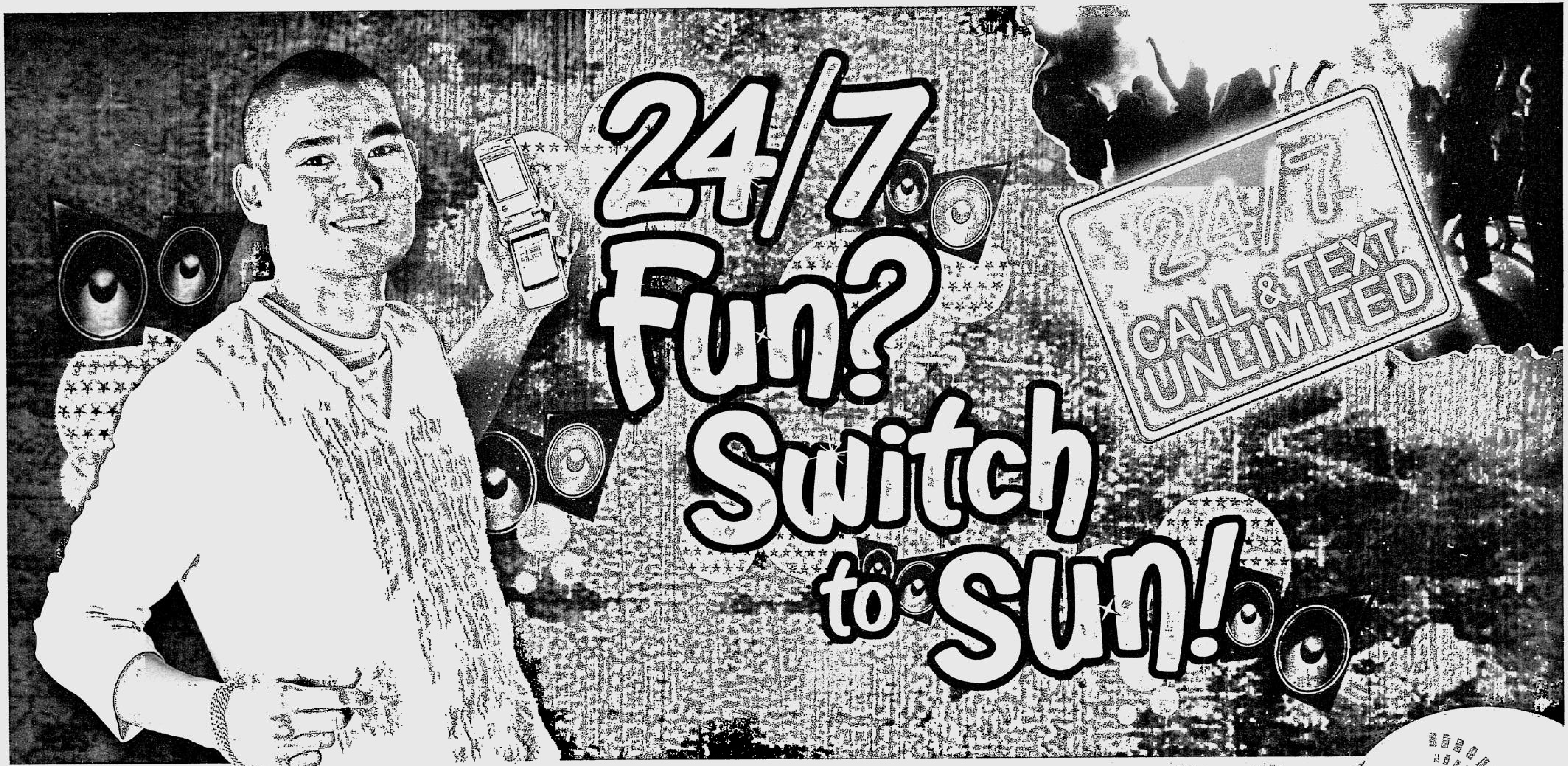

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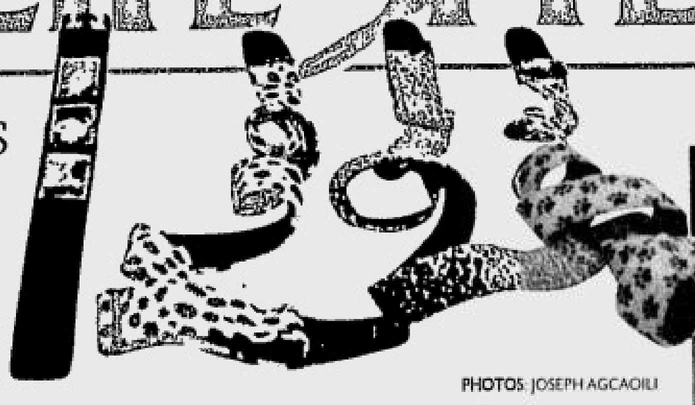

PHOTOS: JOSEPH AGCAOILI

Jazz up your guitar

Here's an awesome gift for your guitar and bass-playing friends. Cherry Pop, an independent clothing and accessory line, has launched ready-to-rock and custom-made guitar straps for girls and guys who want straps out of the ordinary. All straps are 60 inches long, are adjustable, and padded for maximum comfort (you can play stark naked and you won't get strap burn!). Prices range from P900 upwards. Log on to www.cherrypopshop.com or text 09193587161.

Maui V. Reyes

PHOTO: MAUI V. REYES

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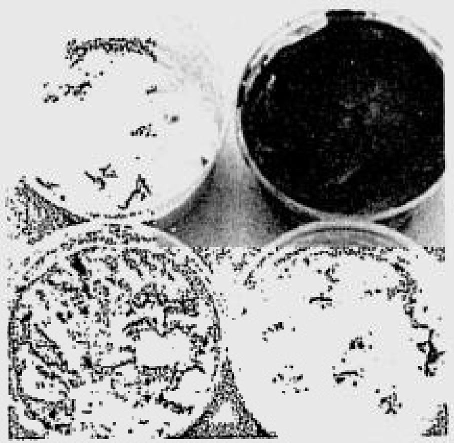


PHOTO: JOSEPH AGCAOILI

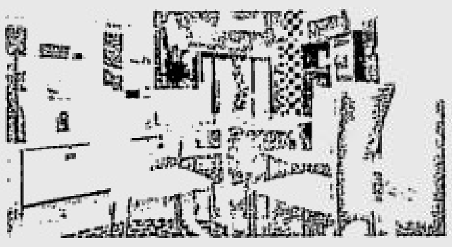
A very chilly Christmas

Many Christmas parties tend to skip the ice cream because of the chilly holidays. Here's an ice cream that will change your mind. Ian Carandang's premium home made ice cream concoctions are a must-have. Called The Ice Cream Barrel, they come in in 30 flavors and are so creamy and rich, you'll forget about putting on holiday pounds. Top 10 flavors are Toblerone Cheesecake, Banana Bonanza, White Chocolate Macadamia, Bailey's Fudge, Choc-ful of Chocolate, Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough, Rocky Road Swirl, Cherry Maguire, Walnut Cream Fudge, and Macho Mint (super strong mint flavors here!). And they're all made in his own kitchen! Prices range from P230 (for a pint) to P460 (quart). Alcoholic ice creams go for P250 (pint) to P500 (quart). For orders and delivery, call 09174643397, or e-mail icecreambarrel@hotmail.com. *Maui V. Reyes*

PHOTO. MAUI V. REYES

Happy endings

Looking for the perfect end for your Christmas dinner? 2bU! recommends Dulce Lin's Mango Torte, made of cream, mangoes and a toffee-flavored crust. It is hands down the best mango cream pie we have tasted in ages. It was immediately devoured at the office, and we're betting it won't last long on your tables either. Call Dulce Lin at 3742165 or visit her store at 36 Times St., Quezon City. *Bianca Consunji*



Let's sparty!

AFTER the mad Christmas rush, everyone would appreciate the chance for a little indulgence and relaxation. Urban Spa is offering a whole slate of Christmas treats for weary souls during the holidays.

Aside from their popular services Le Urban Spa Signature Massage, Luxury Polish with Milk Bath, Executive Bliss with Hair Spa, As in Heaven and Foot Massage, there are also other gift items available—Proud Mary bags, Cereo candles, Tea sets, Twinnings tea of London and other books. Gift packages are available for as low as P950 with free tea sets and Urban Spa Gift certificates.

Students can purchase Urban Spa Gift Certificates for their parents at discounted rates, as long as they present their school IDs. Purchases can be made until December 31. Services may be redeemed until the end of February.

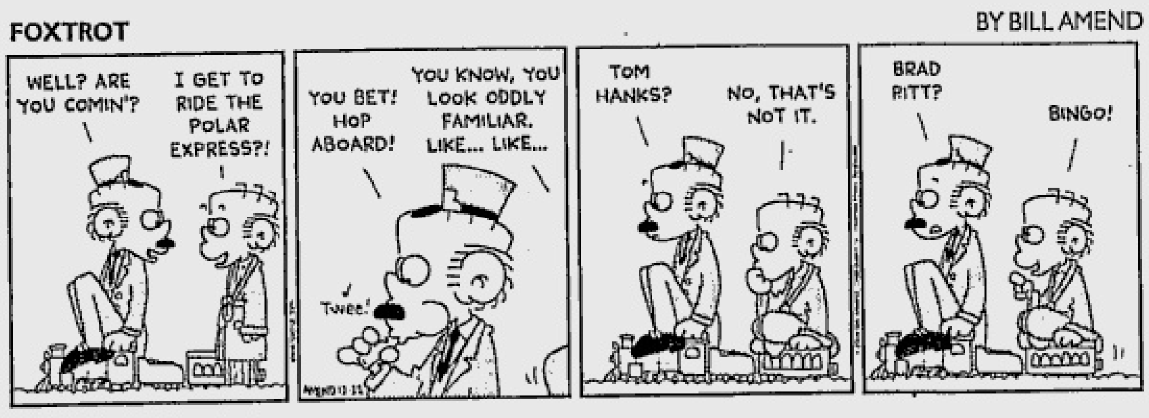
Call Urban Spa at 6876195 to 96 or text 09178919195 or 09192037517. Visit www.urbanspaphil.com. Urban Spa is located at Level 5 of Shangri-La Mall.

Pam Pastor

For smooth, straight hair.
Rejoice
Rich

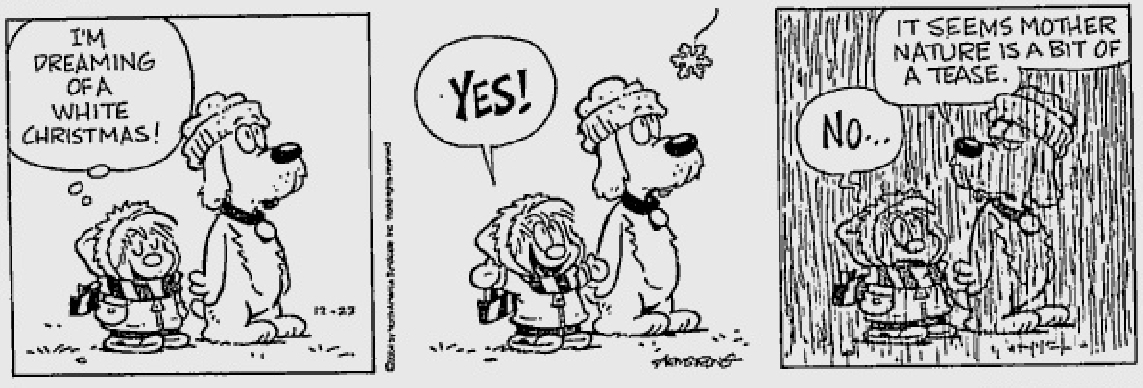
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WELL? ARE YOU COMIN'?
I GET TO RIDE THE POLAR EXPRESS?!
YOU BET! HOP ABOARD!
YOU KNOW, YOU LOOK ODDLY FAMILIAR. LIKE... LIKE...
TWEE!
TOM HANKS?
NO, THAT'S NOT IT.
BRAD PITT?
BINGO!

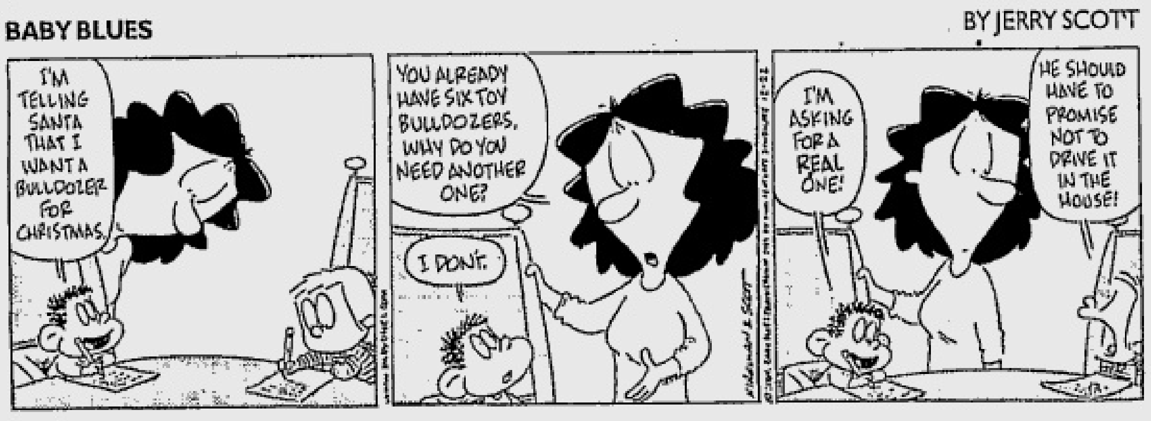
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I'M DREAMING OF A WHITE CHRISTMAS!
12-22
YES!
ARMSTRONG
IT SEEMS MOTHER NATURE IS A BIT OF A TEASE.
NO...

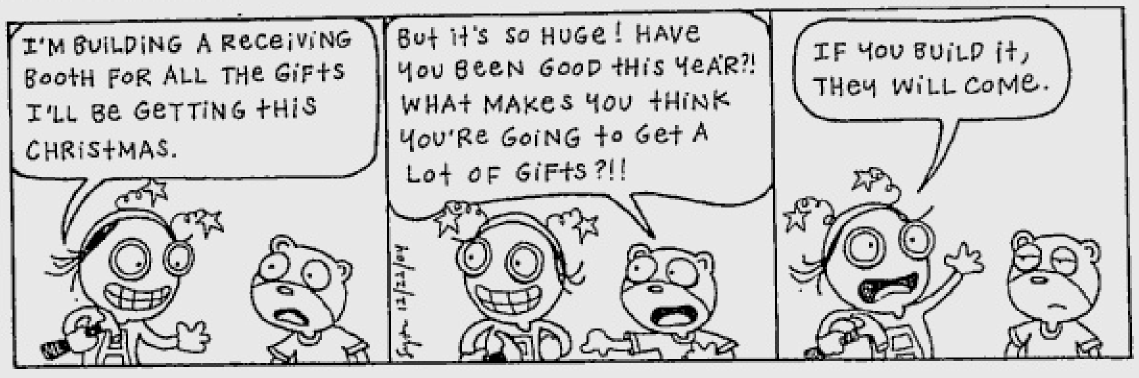
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


I'M TELLING SANTA THAT I WANT A BULLDOZER FOR CHRISTMAS.
YOU ALREADY HAVE SIX TOY BULLDOZERS. WHY DO YOU NEED ANOTHER ONE?
I DON'T.
I'M ASKING FOR A REAL ONE!
HE SHOULD HAVE TO PROMISE NOT TO DRIVE IT IN THE HOUSE!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I'M BUILDING A RECEIVING BOOTH FOR ALL THE GIFTS I'LL BE GETTING THIS CHRISTMAS.
BUT IT'S SO HUGE! HAVE YOU BEEN GOOD THIS YEAR?! WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO GET A LOT OF GIFTS?!!
12/22/04
IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are careful because you like to be prepared. Whatever you do, you do thoroughly. You need the security of structure in your life. You're patient, serious and focused. Many do not know that you are also prophetic. You enjoy close friends and family. Major changes take place this year, perhaps as significant as those in 1994.

Birthdate of: Diane Sawyer, TV journalist; Barbara Billingsley, actress; Ralph Fiennes, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You're in the mood to shop today. You want to buy something beautiful that lasts a long time. Good luck!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): The Moon is in your sign today. This brings you good fortune, but at the same time it makes you more emotional than usual.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You need peace and quiet today if you can find it. Try to pamper yourself a bit. If you can, seek solitude to rest, read or contemplate your navel.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): A heart-to-heart conversation with a female friend will please you today. Be open to this opportunity if it arises. (This dialogue will benefit you both.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You'll call attention to yourself today, even if you don't intend to. Keep this in mind. (You might want to look your best, because people will notice you.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): If you can do something different and out of the ordinary today, you'll be pleased. Subconsciously, you have a need to escape from your routine. You want adventure! (Give this to yourself if you can.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a good day to take care of red-tape details like insurance matters, bills, debt, inheritances and shared property. Clear these things out of the way.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You will have to go more than halfway when dealing with others today. The Moon is opposite your sign, and this forces you to compromise. You might as well be graceful about it.

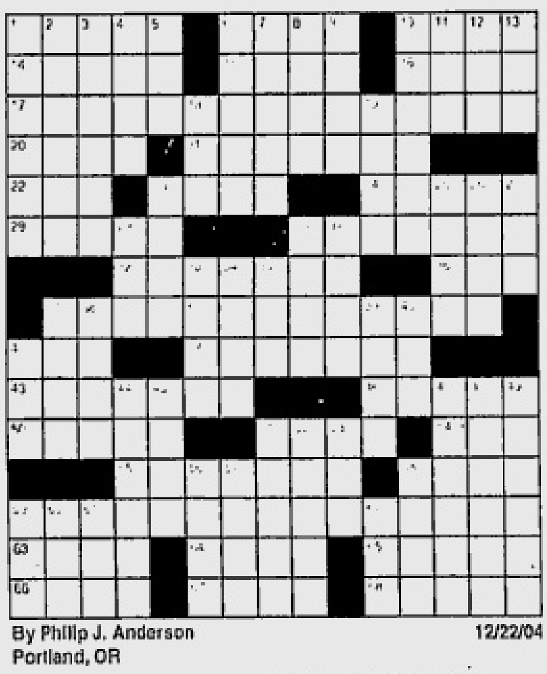
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You want to be productive today. You want to get things done in an effective, efficient way. Fortunately, your desire for good results will give you the energy you need to do the job.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a lovely day for a long lunch or a social dinner—or a party. The bottom line is you want to have fun! (Plus, you're feeling romantic.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Conversations with a parent might be significant today. Family members need your attention. And you have something to say to them.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Don't stay at home today. Get out and chat with others. It's a good day for shopping, buying and selling, and negotiating business deals. In fact, it's a good day for business and commerce in general.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
12/22/04

ACROSS

1 Pipe root
6 Spill the beans
10 Cancun cash
14 Hair-raising
15 Leisure
16 Lab medium
17 Animated Disney feature, with "The"
20 McKellen and McEwan
21 Lessening of hostilities
22 Doctor of music?
23 London art gallery
24 Remove the bolt
28 Icelandic sagas
30 Southwestern saloon
32 Government seat
36 Utmost degree
37 1984 Bill Murray movie
41 __-Magnon
42 Disregard an offense
43 Mottled
46 Wight and Skye
50 Steeple top
51 "Lelia" author
54 Inning ender
55 Marry
58 Company's emblem
59 Polanski's first feature film
63 "Jane__"
64 Land portion
65 Dunne or Cara
66 Have on
67 Dramatist O'Casey
68 Nostrils

DOWN

1 Next to
2 Bounty
3 Pressed
4 Affectations
5 Blushing
6 "John Brown's Body" poet
7 Starbucks order
8 U.S. tennis stadium
9 __ there, done that
10 Proprietary right
11 Psyche part
12 __ Diego
13 Raw mineral
18 Actress Lupino
19 Dumbfound
23 Winter Palace ruler
25 Crooner Crosby
26 Pay to play
27 Stadium cheer
29 Sure shot
30 Amusing one
31 Plus
33 Kind of car or setter
34 Alligator-logo brand
35 2000 lbs.
37 Golf hazard
38 Pueblo people
39 Author Bagnold
40 __ Plaines, IL
41 Today's LPs
44 Give priority to
45 __-majesty
47 Ransacker
48 O'Neill or Ormandy
49 Puts away
51 "Kama __"
52 Blanched
53 Named at birth
56 Zadora and others
57 A single time
58 "Doctor Zhivago" character
59 London gardens
60 Louis or Carrie
61 Author Levin
62 Triumph

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

A	S	W	A	N	■	A	R	C	■	F	R	E	U	D
C	H	I	L	E	■	M	E	L	■	L	I	M	B	O
R	E	N	E	W	■	B	E	A	■	U	N	I	O	N
E	D	S	■	W	O	L	F	W	H	I	S	T	L	E
■	■	■	B	A	R	E	S	■	A	D	E	S	T	E
S	C	A	R	V	E	S	■	E	L	I	■	■	■	■
A	R	T	I	E	■	■	C	A	T	C	A	L	L	S
S	A	R	A	■	H	O	O	T	S	■	L	E	I	A
S	W	A	N	S	O	N	G	■	■	L	O	V	E	S
■	■	■	■	A	W	E	■	R	H	E	N	I	S	H
C	R	E	A	T	E	■	P	E	A	L	E	■	■	■
H	O	R	S	E	L	A	U	G	H	S	■	R	A	H
A	W	A	K	E	■	P	T	A	■	I	M	A	G	E
O	A	T	E	N	■	S	I	R	■	U	R	G	E	R
S	N	O	W	S	■	E	N	D	■	S	T	U	D	S

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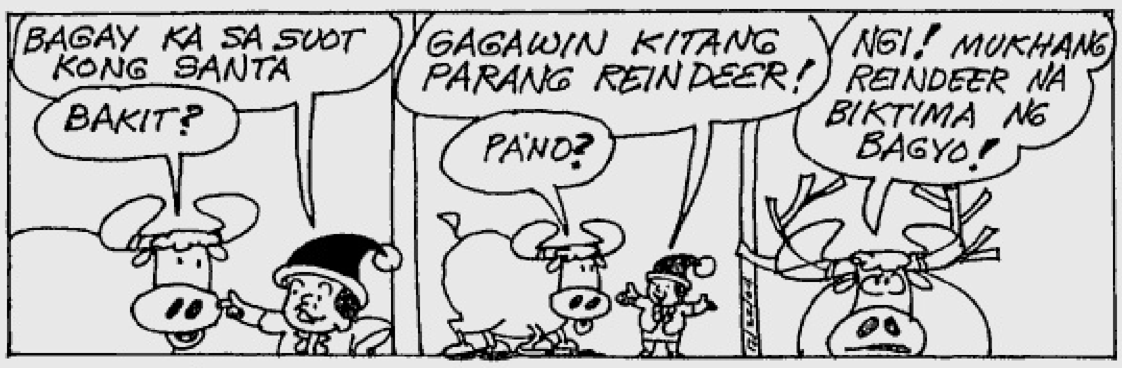
12/22/04

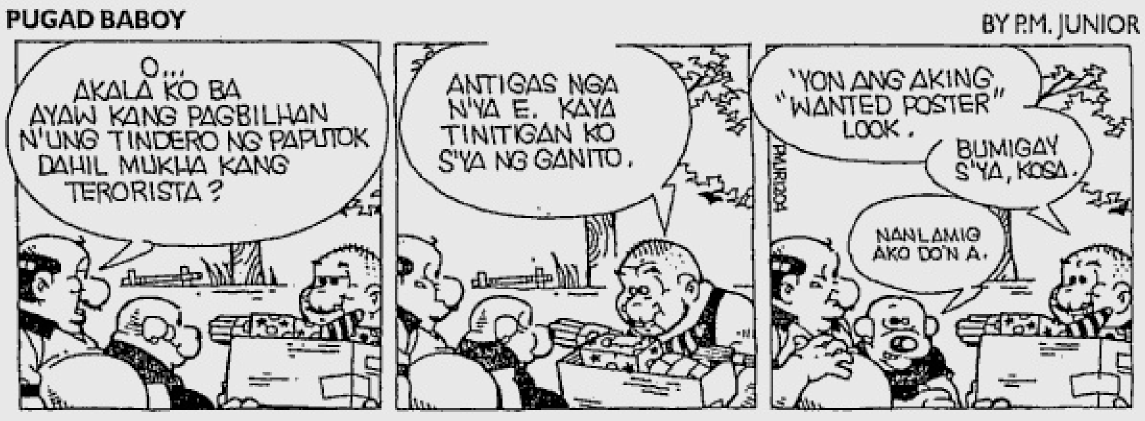
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


BAGAY KA SA SUOT KONG SANTA
BAKIT?
GAGAWIN KITANG PARANG REINDEER!
PA'NO?
NGI! MUKHANG REINDEER NA BIKTIMA NG BAGYO!

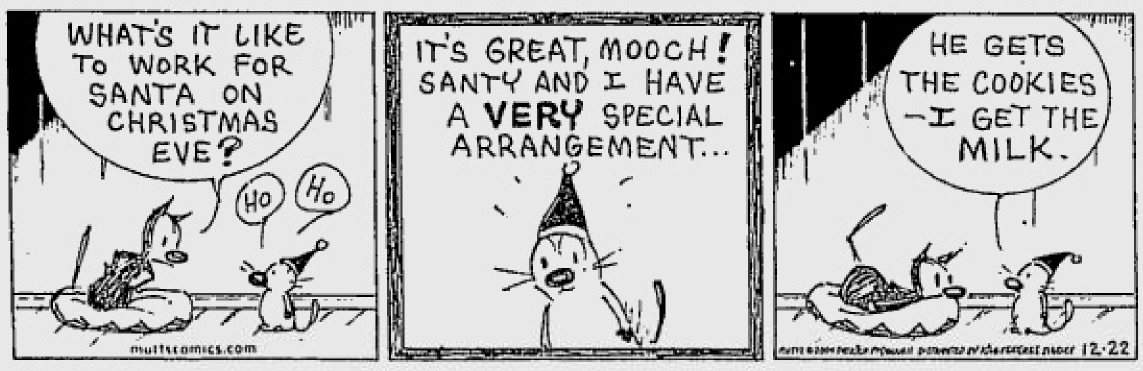
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


O... AKALA KO BA AYAW KANG PAGBILHAN N'UNG TINDERO NG PAPUTOK DAHIL MUKHA KANG TERORISTA?
ANTIGAS NGA N'YA E. KAYA TINITIGAN KO S'YA NG GANITO.
PMJR2004
'YON ANG AKING "WANTED POSTER" LOOK.
BUMIGAY S'YA, KOSA.
NANLAMIG AKO DO'N A.

MUTTS

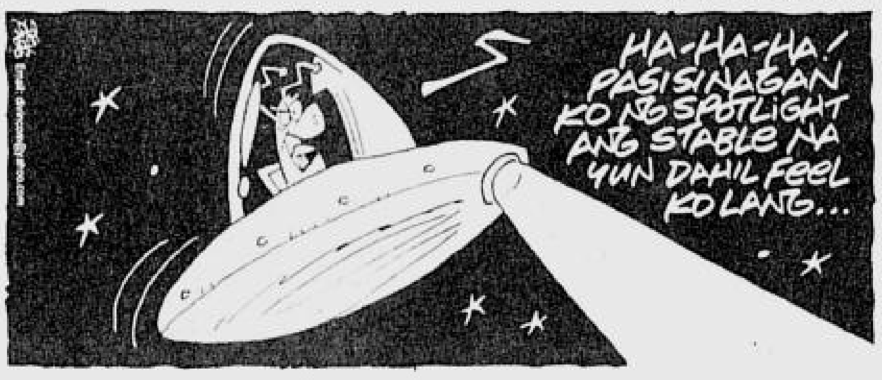
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WHAT'S IT LIKE TO WORK FOR SANTA ON CHRISTMAS EVE?
HO
HO
muttscomics.com
IT'S GREAT, MOOCH! SANTY AND I HAVE A VERY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT...
HE GETS THE COOKIES —I GET THE MILK.
12-22

DIVINE COMEDY

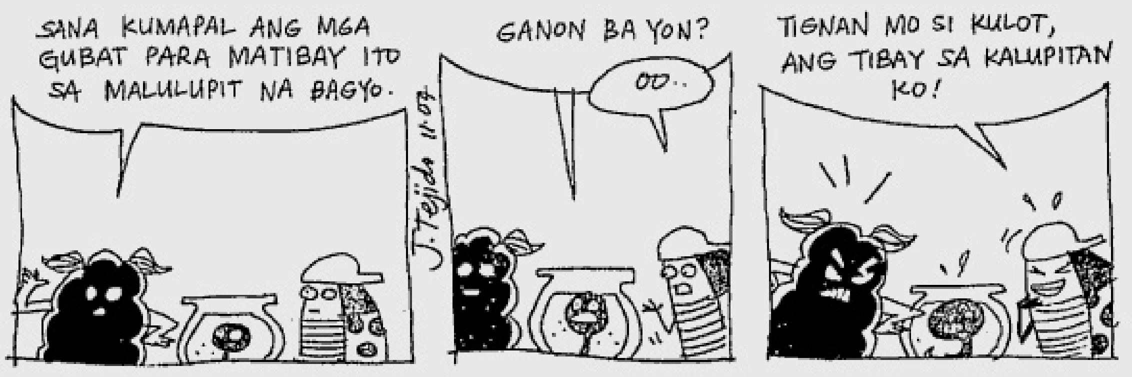
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

MAY MGA SABI-SABI NA ANG BETHLEHEM STAR DAW AY UFO FLYING SAUCER LAMANG


HA-HA-HA! PASISINAGAN KO NG SPOTLIGHT ANG STABLE NA YUN DAHIL FEEL KO LANG...

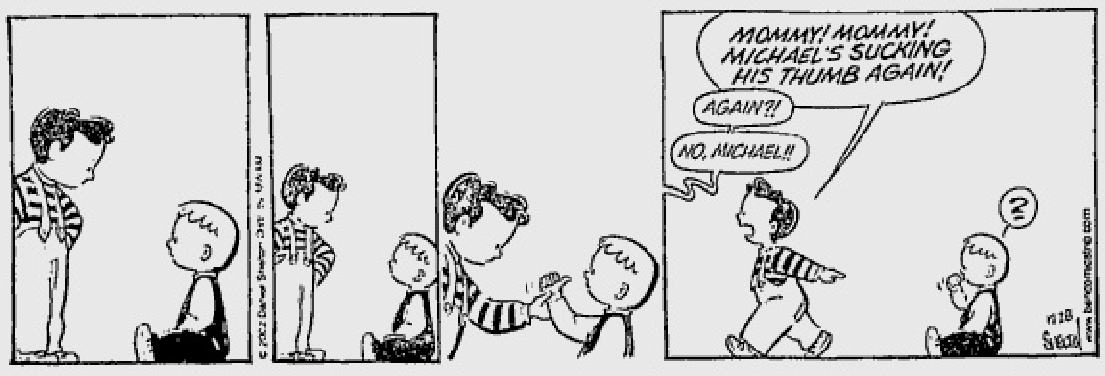
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


SANA KUMAPAL ANG MGA GUBAT PARA MATIBAY ITO SA MALULUPIT NA BAGYO.
J. Tejido 11-07
GANON BA YON?
OO..
TIGNAN MO SI KULOT, ANG TIBAY SA KALUPITAN KO!

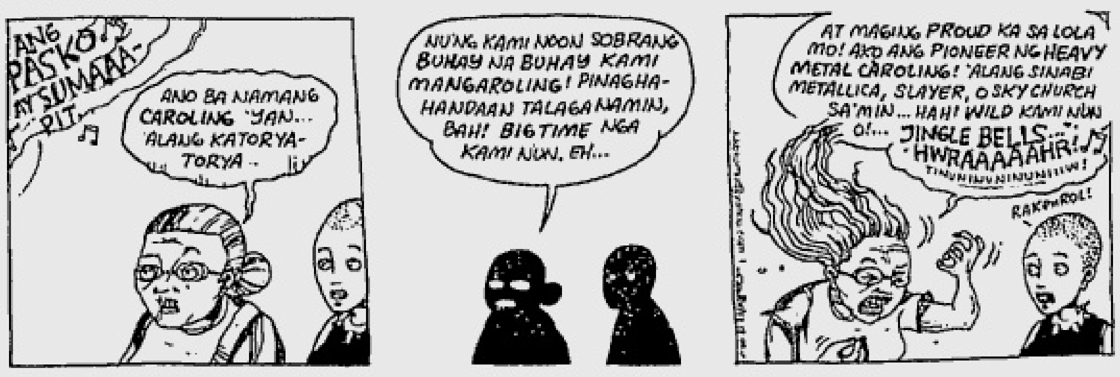
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


MOMMY! MOMMY! MICHAEL'S SUCKING HIS THUMB AGAIN!
AGAIN?!
NO, MICHAEL!!
?

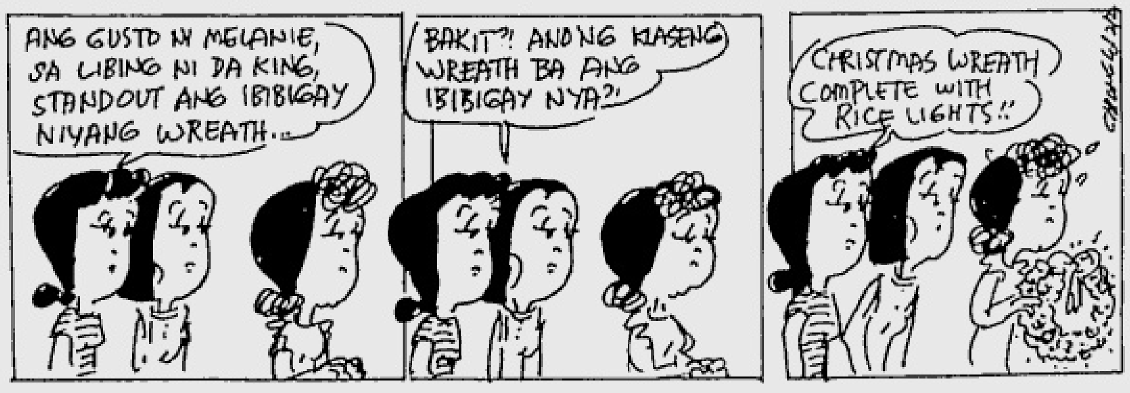
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


ANG PASKO AY SUMAAA-PIT
ANO BA NAMANG CAROLING 'YAN... 'ALANG KATORYA-TORYA..
NU'NG KAMI NOON SOBRANG BUHAY NA BUHAY KAMI MANGAROLING! PINAGHAHANDAAN TALAGA NAMIN, BAH! BIGTIME NGA KAMI NUN. EH...
AT MAGING PROUD KA SA LOLA MO! AKO ANG PIONEER NG HEAVY METAL CAROLING! 'ALANG SINABI METALLICA, SLAYER, O SKYCHURCH SA'MIN... HAH! WILD KAMI NUN O!... JINGLE BELLS... HWRAAAAAAHR! TINUNINUNINUNIIIW!
RAKENROL!

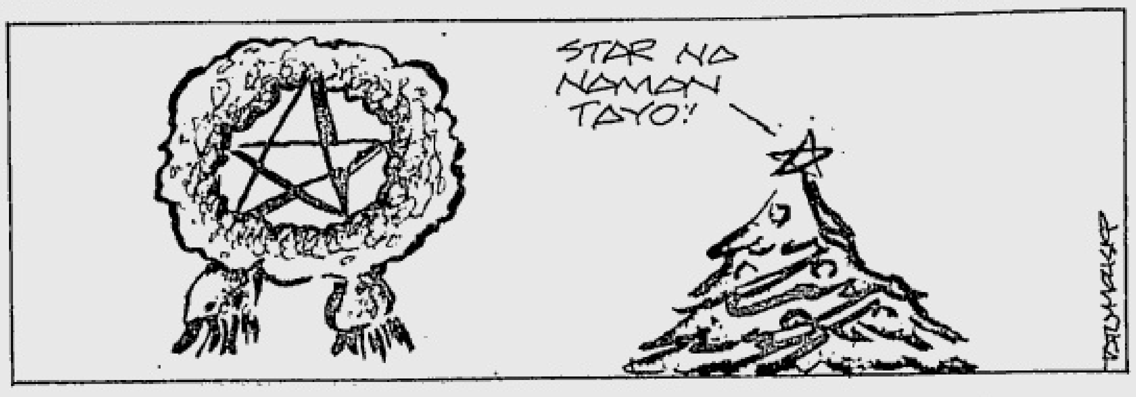
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ANG GUSTO NI MELANIE, SA LIBING NI DA KING, STANDOUT ANG IBIBIGAY NIYANG WREATH..
BAKIT?! ANO'NG KLASENG WREATH BA ANG IBIBIGAY NYA?
CHRISTMAS WREATH COMPLETE WITH RICE LIGHTS!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


STAR NA NAMAN TAYO!

Cool candleholders

Angel Ferraz of Mystic Mama has hands that can transform candle holders into works of art.

To give them extra pizzazz, she adds beads and crystals. No doubt about it—these candle holders will light up any home. Call 0918-5035212. *Pam Pastor*

Glitterati

If your Christmas needs a little sparkle, we've got two bright ideas.

Number one, Lancôme's Limited Edition Juicy Bar Disco. Get three yummy Juicy Tubes in one pretty package. Dazzle your friends with your sparkling lips. This lip gloss is as yummy as it sounds. Get one for yourself (we know you couldn't resist) and get one for your lip gloss-loving friend. And if your friend isn't a big gloss fan, don't worry, she'll definitely be a convert. These tubes are so yummy that even my brother couldn't resist.

You can find it at your favorite beauty stores and *kikay* havens.

Second on this short list is Body Shop's Sparkle Cube—white glitter that changes color when light hits it. You can use it for your eyelids and for your cheeks. And if you really want to shine, use it on your body and hair. Grab your own Sparkle Cube (P495) at The Body Shop branches nationwide.

Pam Pastor

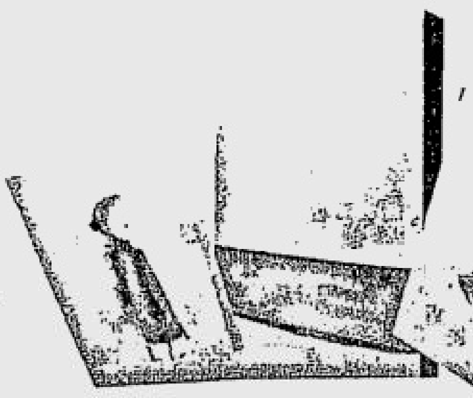
PHOTOS BY
JOSEPH AGCAOILI

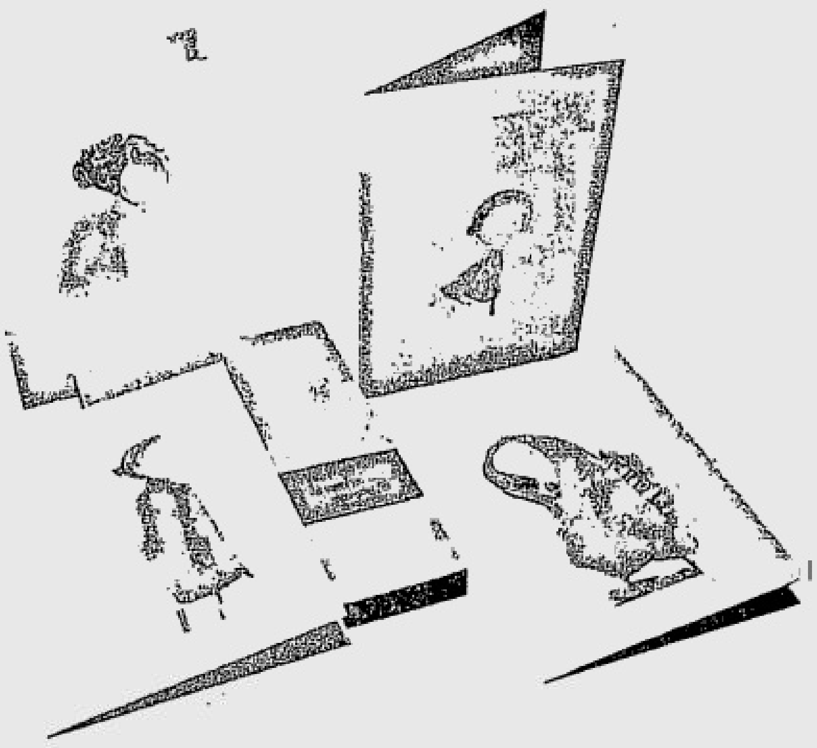
Give art on Christmas day

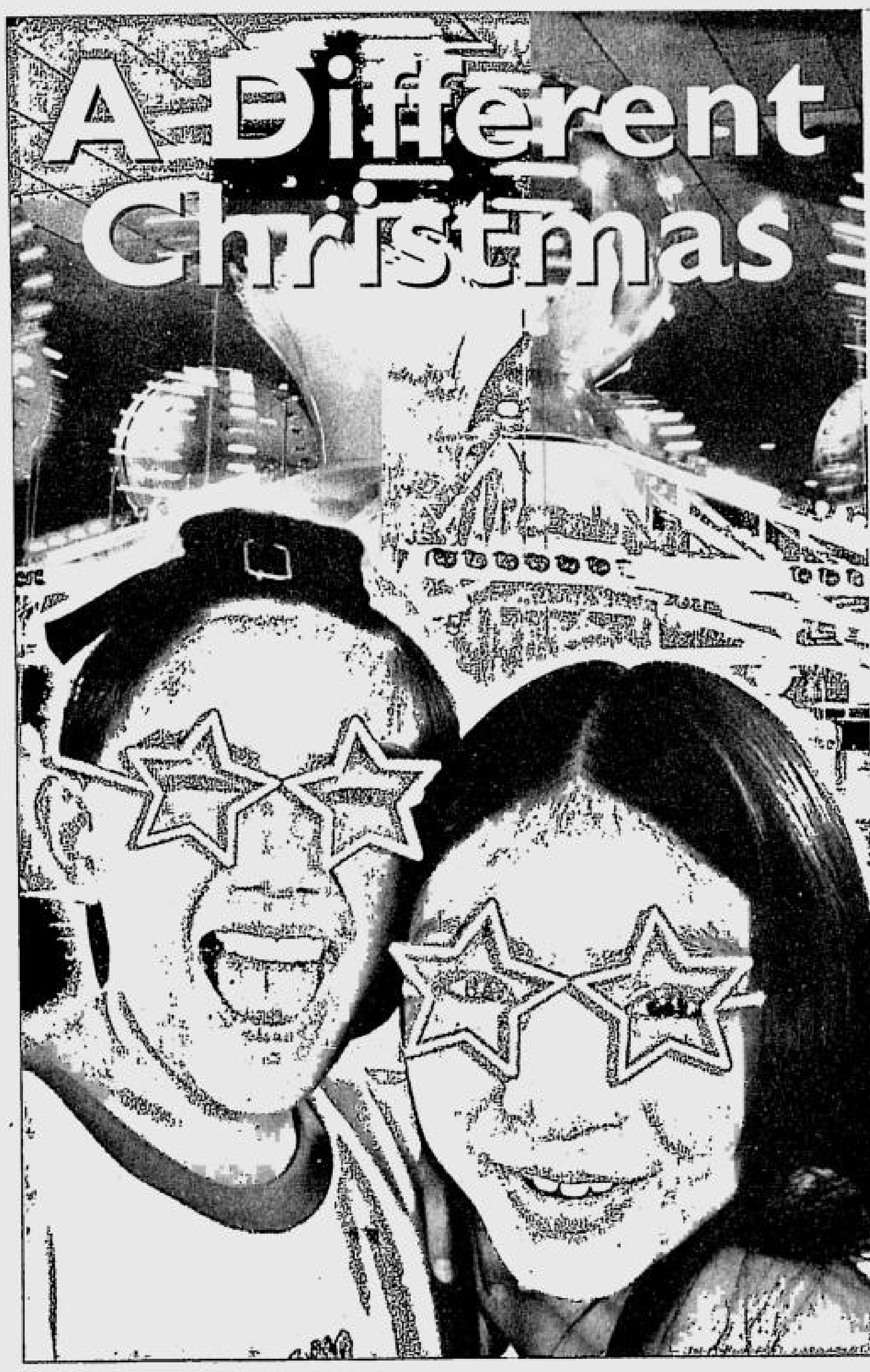
Say goodbye to cheesy, generic cards and hello to Batik Melancholy Notecards.

The notecards, which feature children's book illustrator Isabel (Pepper) Roxas' new series of watercolors, can be used as quirky Christmas cards or as thank-you cards for the people who remembered you this season.

The cards come in four designs and are available in packs of four (P160/set) or a set of eight which comes with a handmade slipcase (P280/set). E-mail Isabel@roxasdesign.com or text 0917-9014463. *Pam Pastor*







MEET AND GREET SANTA
Let the child out in you as Storyland brings you Santa. The magic of Christmas will not be complete without our adorable Santa!
Southmall December 18, 24 & 25
Fairview December 19, & 26

CLUBBIE CHRISTMAS PARTY
A Different magical Christmas party awaits our dear Clubbies! Lootbags, freebies, fun games and exciting activities for all Clubbies! So, join us as we celebrate the magic season of Christmas!
Southmall December 18
Fairview December 19

CHRISTMAS MUSICALS
Enjoy a different musical this Christmas season. Be delighted with the joyful songs of Christmas!
Southmall December 19, 25, 30 & January 2
Fairview December 18, 26, 30 & January 1

DEAR SANTA PLAYS
Have a wonderful christmas watching the plays that Storyland will bring you. Liven the child in everybody's heart as we learn the lessons dear Santa will teach us.
Southmall December 26 & January 1
Fairview December 25 & January 2

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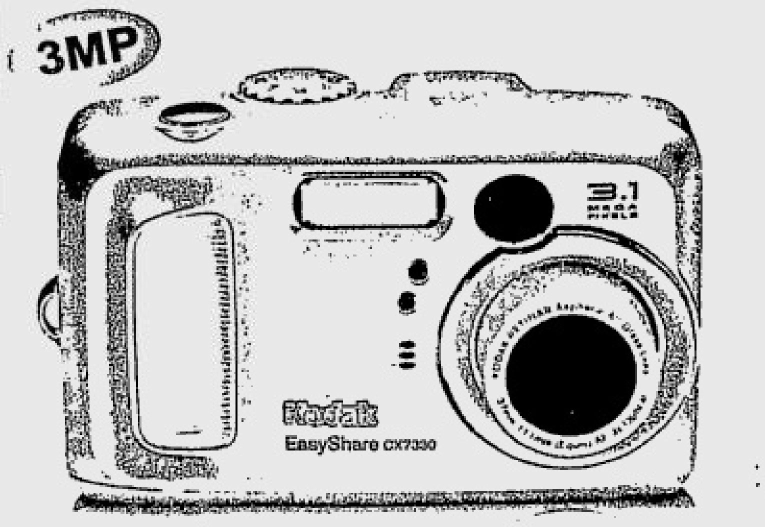

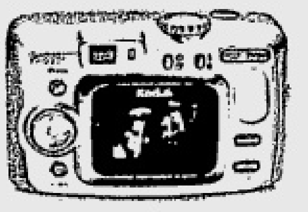

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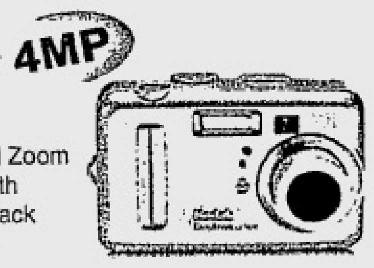

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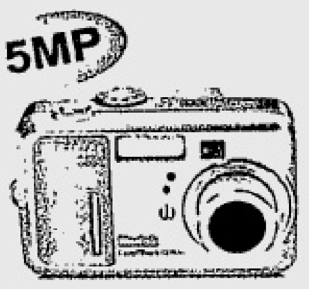

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How to stay blonde forever

Tim Yap

PEOPLE often ask me how I can maintain my Paris Hilton-esque locks. Some people think I'm wearing a platinum wig—I'm not **Tessa** (though I aspire to be as larger than life as our favorite Sea Princess).

People close to me even go to the extremes of even pulling my hair till it hurts—I suspect it's their secret revenge. And they are surprised to find out that my hair is actually soft and very touchable. My secret? Nope, I didn't marry a rich person or had it rebonded.

Aside from my daily jaunts to H Salon where **Henri Calayag** handles my tresses, I have Kerastase to thank. Every now and then, I indulge in a hair-spa treatment (either here or abroad) and make sure my hair gets the right treatment it deserves.

I'm not so much into massages (I like giving more than receiving) and I feel that the hair is really one of the most important parts of our body (a bad hair day can ruin you). It's not strange to see men these days indulge in facials and spa treatments. The next step? A hair spa.

And the best one this side of town just opened its doors. After much anticipation, the Kerastase Institute, owned by **Ed** and **Renna Angeles**, is now open at 6750 for those craving extraordinary hair pampering. It has technology developed by L'Oreal Recherche Avancee.

"It's the ideal space for your locks' luxury, with top-of-the-line service, creating a sublime mecca for those with constant hair woes. It offers the latest and most personalized treatment," **Angelique Villaraza**, Kerastase lady, proudly beams about the space designed by architect Conrad Onglao.

Their launch event happened last Thursday, which was a success. The whole 6750 was filled with scene movers and shakers intrigued by the hair spa which is, as early as now, fully booked till next year. Try getting an appointment and consider yourself lucky if you get a slot.

Too soon, too soon

That Thursday as we were putting Super! to bed, I got a call from my dear friend **Ipe Cruz**, who was frantic to submit the answers to the Super questionnaire that we gave him to promote his book, titled "Pop," under ABS-CBN Publishing.

We weren't able to put it out, we were more concerned about what would happen to Ipe's sister KC, who was still in the house as we spoke to each other. As we all know by now, she passed away during the fire that broke out in the De Venecia house that fateful night.

"Tita **Gina** (de Venecia) looked catatonic," a friend who was there the whole time told me. The De Venecia family went to a nearby hotel to rest right after. I've been spending time with Ipe (along with Ipe's best buddy, **David Nugent**) outside the wake, if only for him to remember the good times with his 16-year-old sister.

"I've never seen Ipe like this," said **Celine Lopez**, Ipe's good friend and childhood buddy. In our group, we always knew Ipe as the Red-Box loving dude who would belt out songs like "Come Fly with Me," "Moondance," "Strangers in the Night," and other Sinatra songs. We didn't quite get close to KC, but Ipe tells us that she was the sweetest girl.

Time to go

As we went around S&R to buy some food for the wake, Ipe waxed philosophically. "I now realize that everybody in your family is a special gift to you. They come in different shapes and personalities. Our role in this world is to love them in our own special

HOW/H3

MIA Borromeo and Maricris Zobel

ISSA Litton and friend

GIRLIE Castro and Abigail Villaraza

AYA de Leon and Paula Cajucom

MICHELLE Concepcion Reyes

ANNA Trinidad

MIGUEL Rosales, Isabel Roces and Rachel Soriano

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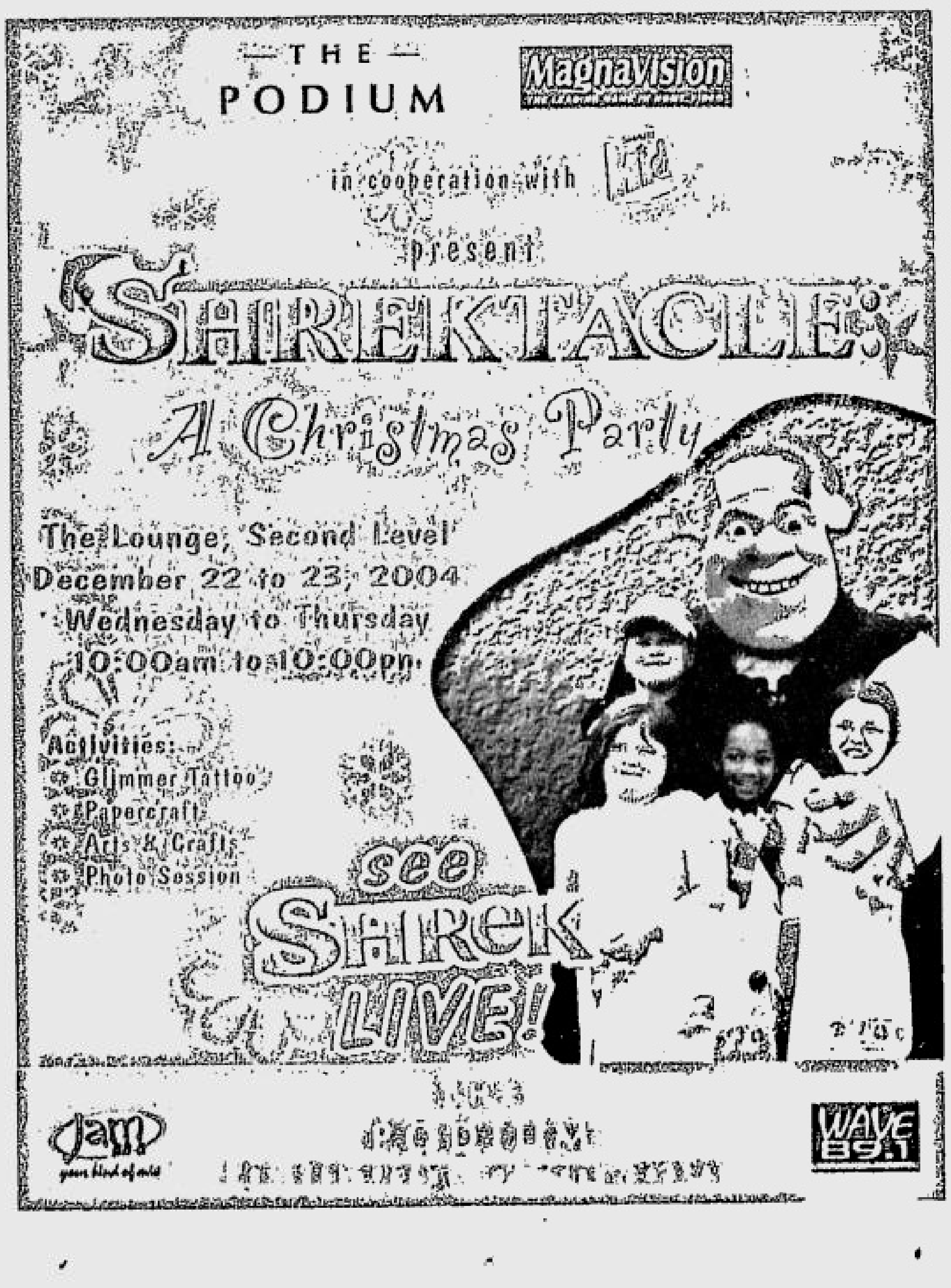

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We wish 'shoe' a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Pair

Put your best foot forward and find your sole-mate this soulful season

By Pam Pastor

THERE'S a different shoe for every personality.

We want you to start the new year with a new pair of shoes. This Christmas, we're giving away 15 new pairs of Skechers shoes to 15 lucky readers.

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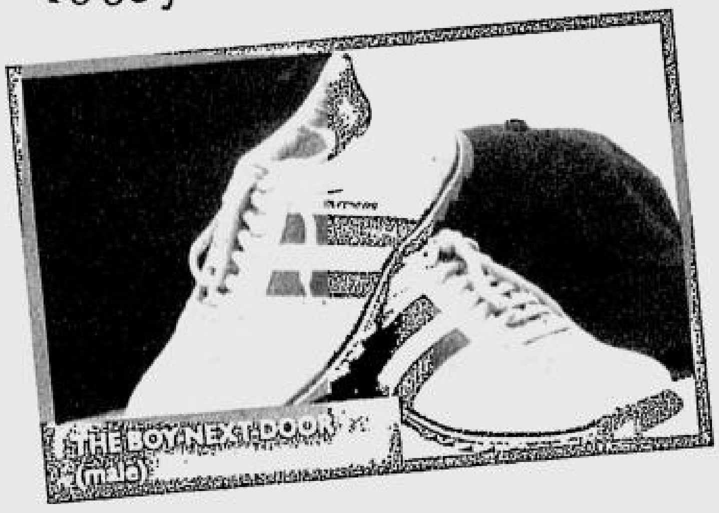
Skechers Footwear is available at leading department stores and specialty stores, and in Fusion concept shops all over the country.


THE BOY NEXT DOOR (male)

THE GEEK guy (male)

THE TEACHER'S p[illegible] (male)

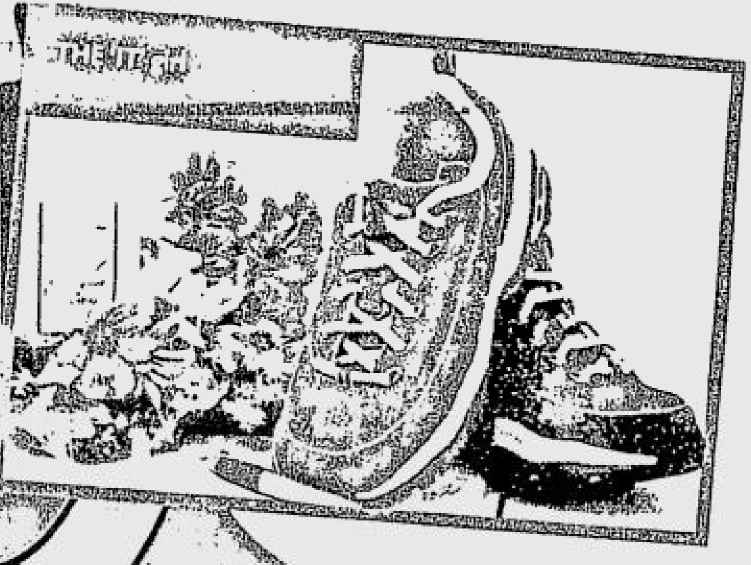
THE ATHLETIC [illegible] (female)

THE ARTIST (male)

THE PART[illegible]

THE TREND setter (female)

THE PROM queen (female)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THE HEARTTHROB (male)

ONE of the boys (female)

THE CAMPUS jock (male)

THE CHEERLEADER (female)

THE PRETTY spiker (female)

THE 'KIKAY' (female)

EH! BOOTABLE!

ETHEL Booba

ZEE! O MY! NICE JJ

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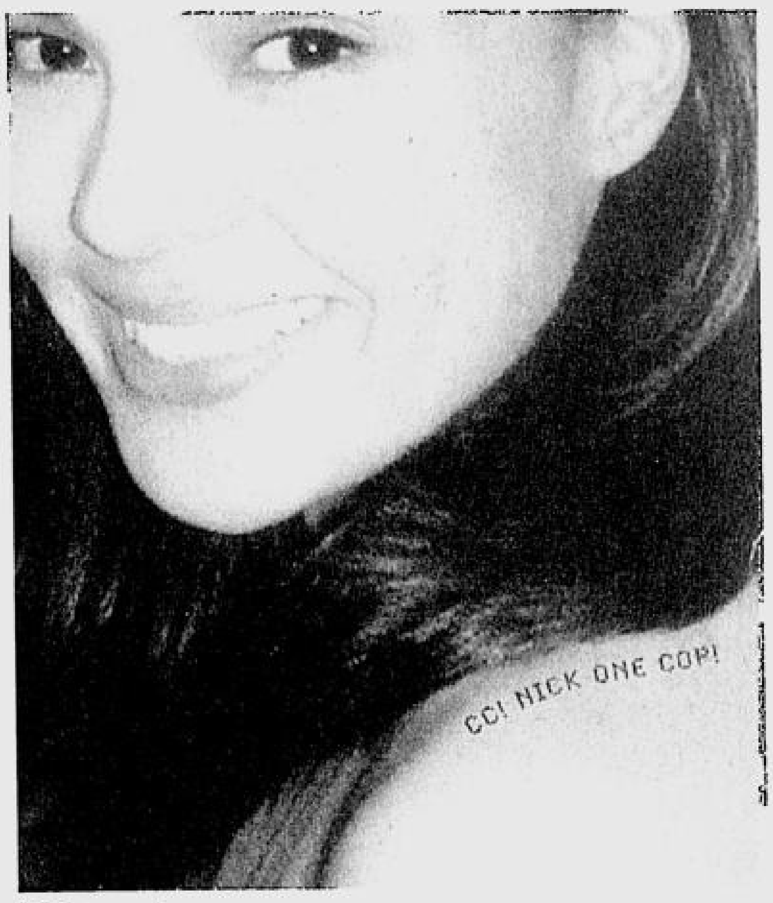
TALS Diaz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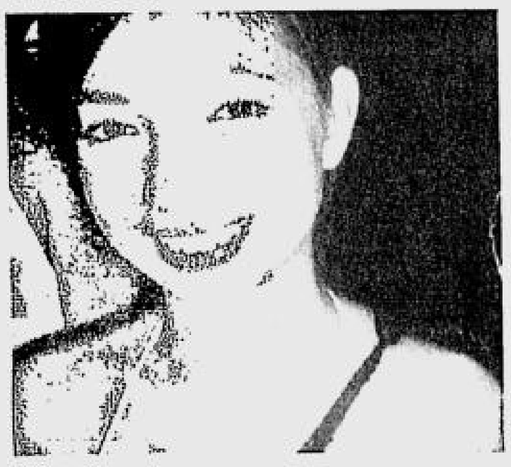
KC Concepcion



MAUI Taylor

BONG BRAIN,QUALM

ROBBY Mananquil

GLAZED PIANO

GINO de la Paz

PHOTOS TAKEN FROM "POP"

How to stay blonde forever

From page H1

way until the time has come for them to go."

He dedicates his book "Pop" to the memory of KC. On this page are some choice snapshots of celebrities, taken over the course of one year. "I aspire to be as intelligent and strong willed as KC. In the end, the most important thing I've ever learned is that having functional and loving relationships with the people who matter to you is the true secret to happiness."

How strange that even in bleak moments like this, right before Christmas at that, the world still teaches us some important life lessons. KC's life may have been short, but as her mom said, "She was always in a hurry to do things." She undoubtedly led a full life. Incidentally, today is the interment of her remains.

There is nothing we can do now but offer prayers for the De Venecia family, and live life the way KC did—with utmost enthusiasm and passion.

Have a meaningful Christmas with your family and loved ones.

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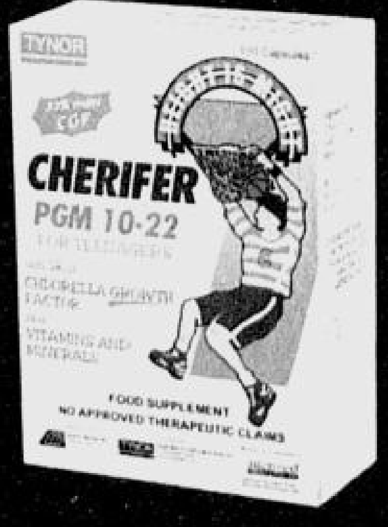

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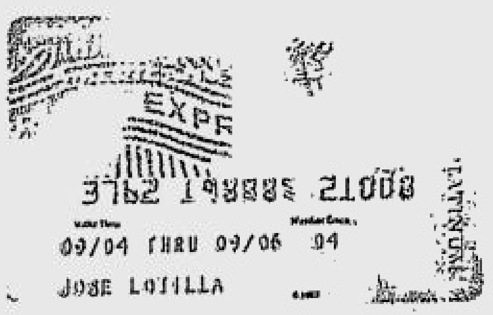

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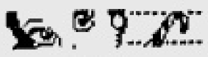
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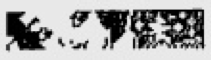
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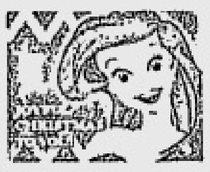
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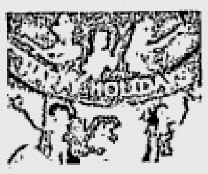
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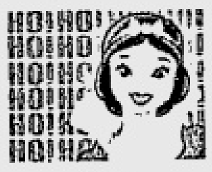
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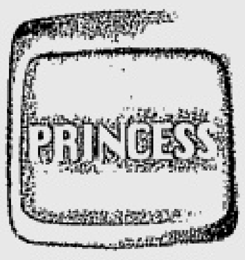

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Arnell Ignacio lets his hair down, again

'If this business becomes successful, then I have another story to tell'

OUT OF HIS HAIR. Arnell moves on without regrets

By Jocelyn Valle
Contributor

ARNELL Ignacio said it was not a mistake getting married to Frannie, the woman he lived with for more than 10 years before they got married last March only to separate shortly after.

"It legitimized my daughter's status," Arnell explained. When the child was born, the Family Code stipulated that a child cannot use the surname of the father if the parents are not married. Now, an illegitimate child can use the father's surname if the father executes an affidavit acknowledging the child's paternity.

"I guess that's just my destiny," Arnell sighed. "Three days after the wedding, I found out everything that happened. Maybe that, too, is part of my destiny. It was time for me to find out everything."

However painful that experience may be, especially with accusations of wife-beating and infidelity, Arnell refuses to wallow in it. "Pain is just a state of mind," he told Inquirer Entertainment. "You can still move on even if you're in pain. You don't have to stop.

"Have you observed that if there's a problem, it lands on the front pages, but the solution is not discussed? For me, the major thing is the solution and not the problem. If people have that kind of attitude, they have a bigger chance of finding success in life."

Moving on

"What happened to me is not a secret. When I moved to ABS-CBN [from GMA 7's 'K: The One-Million Peso Videoke Challenge'], I got a lot of negative publicity. Should I cry over it? What was going to happen? It was so unproductive. My business was taken from me, what should I do? Should I fight for it? When you think about it, that wouldn't help me get over it.

"What I did was I moved on right away. I looked for money. I was even able to help raise funds for the construction of a bridge. I'm still working on it. My world is new so I want everything to be new, too. A problem, even if you solve it, will not help you."

Arnell said friends like his "MTB" co-hosts Ai Ai de las Alas and Edu Manzano helped him recover fast from his nightmare. "I'm lucky to have wonderful people around me," he said. "I got a support system instantly."

Arnell's daughter Sofia keeps him going, he said. "She's doing very well. In fact, she's doing even better in school now. She just won a gold medal and a silver medal in ice-skating. I'm not saying, though, that our setup is better now."

The singer-comedian announced that he's now working on the annulment of his marriage. "So (Frannie) will be free and I'll be free," he nodded.

Losing money

Christmas for Arnell is no different from years past when his family was still complete. "I'm so used to not celebrating it. It has noth-

ARNELL/A2

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BAD SANTA
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This is the story of two criminals who disguise themselves as Santa Claus (Thornton) and his elf, traveling across the country to major malls, using the good will people have towards Santa to rob the stores blind. The plan is going great until the two baddies meet an introverted 8-year-old boy who reminds them of the true meaning of Christmas.

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HAROLD AND KUMAR
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Two likeable underdogs (John Cho & Kal Penn) for whom things never seem to go right, set out on a Friday night quest to satisfy their craving for White Castle hamburgers and end up on an epic journey of deep thoughts and deeper inhaling.

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This is the story of Honey (Alba), a tough sexy dancer from the inner city, who becomes a successful music video choreographer, a career which is threatened when her mentor makes her either sleep with him... or get blacklisted within the industry. She ultimately decides to pursue her lifelong dream of opening her own dance studio for inner-city youths.

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Catch The Bunnyguards only here at SM Cinemas! Watch how Erhan and Stefan get to be heroes for a day! See fantastic, unforgettable movies, critics are raving about only here at SM Cinemas!

Raymond Manalo keeps the faith

RAYMOND MANALO, compared to Martin Nievera

EVER since he emerged runner-up to Rachelle Ann Go in "Search for a Star," people have been waiting for Raymond Manalo to make it big.

Now, after his impressive performances in the concerts "Night of the Champions" and "Pinoy Idol: Battle of the Popstars"—where he more than held his ground alongside the more seasoned Erik Santos, Mark Bautista and Christian Bautista—Raymond has finally come to his own with the release of his debut album, "Faithfully," from Viva Records.

The album contains Raymond's revival of "Kung Alam Ko Lang," a big hit for Toni Daya in the early '90s. The song, which is the album's carrier single, has been getting very good airplay and making people wonder who the singer is.

The good-looking, 21-year-old, whose looks and silky-smooth voice have made people compare him to Martin Nievera, says it wasn't that difficult to interpret the '90s song, even if it was originally popularized by a female singer. "Universal *naman kasi yung* theme *ng kanta*, which is about your loved one's being unfaithful," explains Raymond.

"Faithfully" also contains "Kailangan Kita," his winning song in the Search for a Star competition. Other cuts include the title track "Faithfully" (composed by Vehnee and Doris Saturno), "Muli" (originally popularized by Rodel Naval), "You Changed My Life in a Moment," "Only Me and You," and "You and I (Have Traveled Far Together)," a duet with Jayanne, an up-and-coming female singer from Pampanga and fellow Search for a Star contestant.

And just in time for the season, the album also includes a Christmas song, "Paskong Walang Ikaw."

Raymond intends to make the best of his budding career, even if it means temporarily setting aside his studies at the Holy Angel University in Pampanga, where he was studying Finance.

The release of "Faithfully" last week may mean less Pampanga visits for Raymond while he's promoting the album, but in his heart, he knows that his fellow Pampangueños as well as his friends, family and fans are proud of him.

SHOW TIME

Santa, magic at Star Malls

SANTA Claus and his little helpers will be at Starmall Edsa today and tomorrow, at Metropolis Star Alabang tomorrow, and at Starmall Las Piñas on Dec. 24.

Ron Michael performs magic tricks and treats at Starmall Edsa on Dec. 28, Starmall Las Piñas on Dec. 29 and Metropolis Star Alabang on Dec. 30.

A special dog and monkey show takes place on Dec. 26 at Starmall Edsa and on Dec. 28 at Metropolis Star Alabang.

Finally, enjoy a night of dazzling fireworks as the Star Group of Malls light up the sky with a special fireworks display to welcome in the New Year on Dec. 30 at Starmall Las Piñas, on Dec. 31 at Starmall Edsa and at Metropolis Star Alabang.

Arnell lets his hair down

From page A3-1

ing to do with [what happened to my family this year]. That's the way I work.

"On December 31, New Year's Eve, I'll be working. My daughter is with me all the time, anyway. Like today, after San Miguel, we'll run to Angeles, Pampanga, for a mall show and then to PICC to host a show."

Getting into another toupee business takes up much of his time, too. When he split up with his wife, he also left their venture, which eventually closed shop.

He admitted losing a lot of money in that failed business venture. "But I won't do what they usually do here, spend a lot of time in investigating who's at fault. I'd rather start anew. Now I have a new shop and it's earning again. We're reopening the old one in Greenhills, plus a new one in Market! Market!"

This time, he has longtime friend Elvie Pineda as a business partner. She owns a chain of beauty centers around the country as well as in Thailand, Bangladesh, Brunei, the Middle East and Australia.

Wigs for Asians

Their business is called Arnelli and Elvie International Creative Hair System (tel. no. 410-9153), whose hairpieces are designed by Arnell and then made in Germany.

"Your wig may come from the US and may be very expensive but it still won't look natural on you because it's meant for Caucasians," he pointed out. "Ours is really for Asians."

Their prices range from P15,000 for the simple pieces to P200,000 for the grander ones.

Arnell also plans to revive his pizza business.

"I guess we have our own script to follow in life," he said. "There are twists and turns. You just have to be better each time you overcome a trial. We're like kids who cry to get their mothers' attention. I'd rather not be like that. My way of calling attention is through my business.

"We're working hard on this one and if it becomes successful, then I have another story to tell," he added, smiling now.

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MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Nightly shows at Boom na Boom

BOOM na Boom Carnival continues to present the China Youth Acrobatic Troupe, with nightly shows at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Tonight at 10:30 p.m., Bloomfield, dubbed the younger version of the popular band Spirit of '67, will perform in a nostalgic Christmas concert.

This will be followed by "Christmas Carols" featuring the PWU Female Ensemble tomorrow, Dec. 23.

On Christmas Day, Boom na Boom opens at 12 noon to accommodate the expected big Christmas crowds. Carnival visitors will be treated to day-long festivities featuring clowns on stilts, street magicians, a magic show, and a Christmas concert. by Ignite Band with Ron Antonio, after the acrobatic show.

DID YOU KNOW...

SINGER-ACTRESS Zsa Zsa Padilla was spotted sipping coffee at Starbucks in Greenbelt in Makati City on Monday afternoon. The singer has just returned from another series of performances abroad and is scheduled to leave for yet another series early next year. Her live-in relationship with comedy king **Dolphy** has been rumored to be shaky, but the couple has been consistently mum about it.

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

POLAR EXPRESS GP 1:30,3:30,5:30 **ALEXANDER** R13 7:15,10:10	**NATIONAL TREASURE** GP 12:10,2:40,5:10,7:40,10:10	**BRIDGET JONES** PG13 12:40,3:00,5:20,7:40,10:00
HAROLD AND KUMAR R13 1:20,3:30,5:40,7:50,10:00	**SHARK TALE** GP 12:30,5:00,9:30 **INCREDIBLES** GP 2:30,7:00	**BAD SANTA** R13 1:25,3:35,5:45,7:55,10:05

MATINEE SCREENINGS BEFORE 5:00 P.M. - P80.00 - MON. - FRI.

star group of cinemas movie guide

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starmall EDSA-SHAW Tel. No. 726.61.50	METROPOLIS star ALABANG Tel. No. 850.42.85	starmall LAS PIÑAS Tel. No. 873.50.04
3 Santa Santita	1 Out of Reach	1 Polar Express
4 Ned Kelly	2 Salat sa Ligaya	2 Santa Santita
5 Salat sa Ligaya	3 Honey	
	4 Santa Santita	
	5 Alexander	
	6 National Treasure	

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For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1	THE POLAR EXPRESS	12:35, 3:05, 5:35 8:05, 10:35 GP
2	BRIDGET JONES DIARY 2	10:30, 12:50, 3:20, 5:50, 8:20, 10:50 PG-13
3	THE INCREDIBLES	11:20, 2:05, 4:50, 7:35, 10:30 GP
4	HAROLD & KUMAR	11:50, 2:30, 5:10 7:50, 10:30 R-13

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NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1	**BAD SANTA**	11:10, 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:10 **P13**
CINEMA 2	**HAROLD & KUMAR**	12:15, 2:25, 4:35, 6:45, 8:55 **R13**

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.
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SHANG CINEPLEX

① NATIONAL TREASURE
FS 11:20AM, 2:00PM, 4:40PM, 7:20PM, LMF 10:00PM **(GP)**

② BRIDGET JONES (EDGE OF REASON)
FS 11:45AM, 2:15PM, 4:45PM, 7:15PM, LMF 9:45PM **(PG-13)**

③ POLAR EXPRESS
FS 11:30AM, 4:30PM, LMF 9:30PM **(GP)**

SHREK 2
FS 2:00PM, LMF 7:00PM **(GP)**

④ ALEXANDER
FS 12:15PM, 3:30PM, 6:45PM LMF 10:00PM **(R-13)**

PREMIERE THEATRE THE INCREDIBLES (GP)
FS 7:00 PM, LMF 9:30PM

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Promo Period December 1-24, 2004 Per DTI-NCR Permit No A3-841 Series of 2004

Araneta Center LEISURE GUIDE

GATEWAY CINEPLEX 10

MOVIE-GOING LIKE NO OTHER
Gateway CinePlex*10
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1	HAROLD AND KUMAR	1:40 4:20 7:00 9:40
2	NATIONAL TREASURE	12:25 3:10 5:55 8:40
3	ALEXANDER	12:30 3:30 6:30 9:30
4	BRIDGET JONES	1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

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ALI MALL CINEMAS

3	Dolby	ALEXANDER	12:00 2:50 5:40 8:30
4	SDDS	HAROLD & KUMAR	1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00
5	dts	BAD SANTA	12:15 2:25 4:35 6:45 8:55
6	Dolby	HONEY	12:15 2:25 4:35 6:45 8:55
7	Dolby	BCUZ OF U	12:00 2:10 4:20 6:30 8:40

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Dec. 25	Sat	1pm 4:30pm 8pm
Dec. 26	Sun	2pm 6pm
Dec. 27	Mon	2pm 6pm
Dec. 28	Tue	6pm
Dec. 29	Wed	2pm 6pm
Dec. 30	Thu	2pm 6pm
Jan. 1	Sat	1pm 4:30pm 8pm
Jan. 2	Sun	2pm 6pm
Jan. 3	Mon	6pm

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY, LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	SALAT SA LIGAYA
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	SALAT SA LIGAYA
B	CLOSED
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA 1,2,3&4	NATIONAL TREASURE / BRIDGET JONES / SPIDERMAN 2 / SHREK 2
PREMIERE THEATRE	THE INCREDIBLES
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	KALABIT
CINEMA-2	SALAT
CINEMA-3	ONE MISSED CALL
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	POLAR EXPRESS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-6	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-7	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-8	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HAROLD & KUMAR
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	ALEXANDER
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	BAD SANTA
CINEMA-12	NATIONAL TREASURE
CINEMA-14	HONEY
CINEMA-15	B CUZ OF U
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	NATIONAL TREASURE
CINEMA-1	PASIYAM
CINEMA-2	BRIDGET JONES
CINEMA-4	POLAR EXPRESS
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE

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MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

• METRO MANILA CINEMAS •

GALLERIA 632-9115/16

1 ALEXANDER • THX	11:30 3:00 6:30 10:00
2 HAROLD AND KUMAR	11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00
3 NED KELLY	12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
4 BRIDGET JONES 2	12:10 2:40 5:10 7:40 10:00
5 BIRTH	12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
6 NATIONAL TREASURE	11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00
7 SHREK 2	11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
8 HONEY	11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00
9 BAD SANTA	11:35 1:40 3:45 5:50 7:55 10:00
10 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON	12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 NATIONAL TREASURE	10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
2 BAD SANTA	10:15 12:15 2:15 4:20 6:25 6:30 10:00
3 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON	10.15 12:15 2:15 4:20 6:25 8:30 10:00
4 PA-SIYAM	10:35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50
5 RESERVE	
6 HONEY	11.00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
7 HAROLD AND KUMAR	10:20 12:15 2:10 4:05 6:00 7:55 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193/99 • 682-8280

1 SEED OF CHUCKY	10.50 12.50 2.50 4:50 6:50 9:00
2 ALEXANDER	12:30 3:30 6:30 9:30
3 SHREK 2	11:50 1:45
BRIDGET JONES 2	3:55 6:25 9:00
4 THE POLAR EXPRESS	10:50 12:50 2:50
2046	4:50 7:05 9:20
5 HONEY	11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10
6 NATIONAL TREASURE	12:20 3:15 6:10 9:05
7 HAROLD AND KUMAR	11:50 2.10 4:30 6:50 9.10
8 BAD SANTA	11:10 1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10

NOVALICHES 935-3229/31

1 ALEXANDER	10:40 1:50 5:00 8:15
2 NATIONAL TREASURE	10.30 1.00 3.30 6:00 9:30
3 BIRTH	11.00 1.00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55
4 THE POLAR EXPRESS	10:30 12:30 2:30
2046	4:35 6:50 9:00
5 THE INCREDIBLES	11:00 1:10
ONE MISSED CALL	3:30 5:50 8:30
6 SHREK 2	11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 6:50 8:30
7 SEED OF CHUCKY	11:00 1:00 3:00 5.00 7:00 8:55
8 NANG NAK	11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55

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PIONEER 687-5378

1 ALEXANDER	11.00 2:20 5.40 9.00
2 SHREK 2	11:10 1:05 3:00 4:55 6:50 8:45
3 NATIONAL TREASURE	12:40 3:20 6:00 8:40
4 BAD SANTA	10.35 12:40 2.45 4:50 6:55 9.00

Citisquare MALABON 288-0985 / 2578

1 BCUZ OF U	11:10 1:30 3:50 6:10 8:30
2 NATIONAL TREASURE	10:30 1:15 3:40 6.05 8:30
3 ALEXANDER	11:00 2:10 5:20 8:30
4 THE POLAR EXPRESS	11:45 1:55 4:05 6:15 8:30

CAINTA 240-4661

1 ALEXANDER	10 05 1:15 4:30 8:00
2 HAROLD AND KUMAR	11:00 1:20 3:40 6:00 8:20
3 HONEY	11:00 1:20 3:40 6:00 8:20
4 NATIONAL TREASURE	11:15 2:10 5.05 8.00

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'At Last,' Cyndi Lauper's back

By Pocholo Concepcion
Contributor

THE NEWS is that Paul McCartney has succeeded in gathering Robbie Williams, members of Coldplay and other hot names in the current British music scene to re-record "Do They Know It's Christmas?," the Bob Geldof-Midge Ure song that triggered a fund-raising campaign in 1984 to help alleviate hunger in Africa.

The new recording, another fund-raiser, is currently on rotation on MTV. We can't help but remember how wonderful and influential the original project was during its time, which featured more than 30 topnotch British musical artists (Sting, U2, Phil Collins, Duran Duran, Spandau Ballet, Culture Club, McCartney, Bowie, etc.) who called themselves Band-Aid and later on performed at Wembley Stadium for the marathon all-star concert Live Aid.

It spawned an American counterpart, USA For Africa, which recorded "We Are the World" led by the biggest black artists of the period like Lionel Richie, Stevie Wonder and Michael Jackson (before he lost his "soul"), as well as a host of rock, pop and country stars.

If you remember "We Are the World," some of the most distinctive voices heard in its high moments were those of Wonder, Ray Charles, Bruce Springsteen, Bob Dylan and Cyndi Lauper.

The late Charles is the subject of a bio-flick, "Ray," which has lead actor Jamie Foxx being touted as a shoo-in for a best actor nomination in the forthcoming Oscars. Springsteen recently released a critically-acclaimed CD about the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Dylan has also figured in the news because his groundbreaking 1965 composition, "Like a Rolling Stone," has been voted the greatest song of all time in a survey of major songwriters, producers, record executives, critics and journalists.

Which brings us to Lauper. We think she deserves notice, too, especially these days when a new CD and DVD of hers have given us the impetus to reassess her past and present contributions to popular music.

Betty Boop

In 1983, Lauper broke into the scene by being the first female artist to score four Top 5 singles from a debut solo album: "Girls Just Want To Have Fun," "Time After Time," "She Bop" and "All Through the Night." Several awards followed, including a Grammy for Best New Artist.

The album's title, "She's So Unusual," captured everything she offered to an audience that was always ready to embrace something new and exciting. Lauper not only looked unusual with rainbow-colored hair and thrift shop clothes; she also sounded weird with her Betty Boop voice.

Well, it was wonderfully weird because we remember summer days in college when the gang would sing along to another hit track off that album, the sarcastic "Money Changes Everything."

Three years later, we were singing along to another hit album and its title track, "True Colors." By then, Lauper had already written songs for movie soundtracks ("The Goonies"); two years later she would try acting in "Vibes" with Jeff Goldblum, although we don't remember seeing it in local theaters.

After the release of "A Night To Remember" in 1989, which contained the Grammy-nominated "I Drove All Night," we somehow lost Lauper—even if in 1991 she was supposed to have recorded, according to critics, "her most consistently tuneful and ambitious album" in "Hat Full of Stars."

For the rest of the '90s we completely forgot about Lauper, not knowing that she had been nominated for an Emmy award in the sitcom "Mad About You," aside from having recorded two more albums, "Twelve Deadly Cyns.... And Then Some" and "Sisters of Avalon."

Dad laps it up

And now, as we sit listening to Lauper's new CD titled "At Last," a few questions arise. Why the heck did she record an album-full of covers? Does it mean she has run out of creative juices? What's behind her choice of cover material?

SHE'S STILL UNUSUAL. Lauper is now 51, but she still dances on a grand piano, has been on a recent tour and is in good shape. And her wonderful Betty Boop voice still commands attention, as do her looks

These and other apprehensions were somehow relieved upon watching the DVD "Cyndi Lauper Live... At Last." Recorded early this year in her hometown, New York City, the nearly two-hour video captures her personal takes on some of the music she actually grew up on. She remembers hearing Latin music in her aunt's home, as well as Frankie Lymon and Teenagers, the Zodiacs and the Beach Boys in her cousins' place.

So that explains her snappy, brass-filled interpretation of Maurice Williams' "Stay," in which one could not resist dancing the cha-cha in a bouncy, if kooky manner.

I caught my father lapping up Lauper's version of the Mack Gordon-Halry Warren title track, while some of the more recognizable tunes we appreciated on the CD include "Walk On By" (Burt Bacharach-Hal David), "La Vie En Rose" (L. Guglielmi-Edith Piaf-M. David), "If You Go Away" (Jacques Brel-R. McKuen), "Until You Come Back To Me (That's What I'm Gonna Do)" (Stevie Wonder-M. Broadmax-C. Paul), "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood" (B. Benjamin-S. Marcus-G. Caldwell), "You've Really Got a Hold On Me" (Smokey Robinson) and "Unchained Melody" (H. Zaret-A. North).

We've heard the original recordings of these songs, but since comparison is odious, it is fair enough to say that Lauper sure knows what she's doing when she transforms these numbers into her own personal sentiments.

Flashes of the unusual

At 51, it's remarkable what she's still capable of doing, having reportedly been on tour and physically in tiptop shape during her fine performance in the DVD gig. At times, flashes of the "unusual" Cyndi come to mind as she proceeds to stand up and dance on top of a grand piano, climb the stairs of a make-believe rooftop building, and strut along to a sizzling instrumental ad lib by a band featuring a woman guitarist and violinist.

Her voice, whoa, is such a commanding presence—sustaining its vibrato, rising in crescendo and zooming down low with equal ease.

In the end, video footage shows Lauper walking on a beach as her voice is heard: "Who you are is part of your instrument... and the surroundings you grew up in is also part of that instrument..."

Cyndi Lauper has just paid tribute to her pride of place and the sounds of her formative years in her own unusual style, and we dig her all the more.

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December 21, 2004
Children's Joy Foundation
3pm Activity Center • 5pm & 7pm Central Plaza

December 22, 2004
Kaibigan Vocal Ensemble
3pm Activity Center • 5pm & 7pm Central Plaza

December 23, 2004
Philippine Symphonic Band
3pm Activity Center • 5pm & 7pm Central Plaza

Hollywood stars to celebrate Chinese film industry's 100th birthday

BEIJING—Chinese movie fans will have a rare opportunity to meet some major Hollywood stars when they come to Beijing and Shanghai next year to celebrate the 100th anniversary of China's film industry.

The China Film Association said Dustin Hoffman, Angelina Jolie and director Oliver Stone were confirmed and negotiations were ongoing with at least 20 more.

"We have already signed Dustin Hoffman, Angelina Jolie and Oliver Stone, and we hope to sign more than 24 in total," China Film Association spokeswoman Liu Xiuwen told Agence France-Presse.

They will be in town for the "The Beijing-Hollywood World Movie Masters Forum 2005," scheduled from Feb. 20 through July 16.

The Hollywood celebrities will give talks on acting, directing and producing.

Organizers aim to make the forum an annual event, drawing more international heavyweights, Xinhua news agency quoted Kang Jianmin, vice president of the China Film Association, as saying.

China, with 1.3 billion people, is seen as a ripe market by the global movie industry.

Recent reports said China was forecast to overtake South Korea in the next five years as Asia's fastest-growing cinema market.

While access to Hollywood films in Chinese cinemas is limited to only 20 each year, virtually every new release in available on pirated DVDs within weeks. *AFP*